STORY SONG AND SERMON

ABIEL HOLMES WRIGHT

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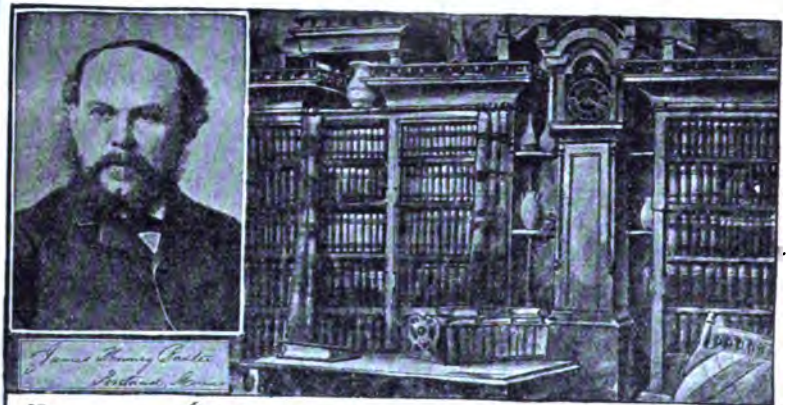


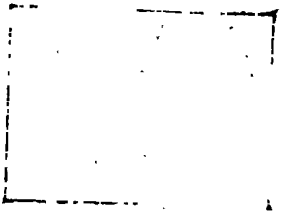
No.

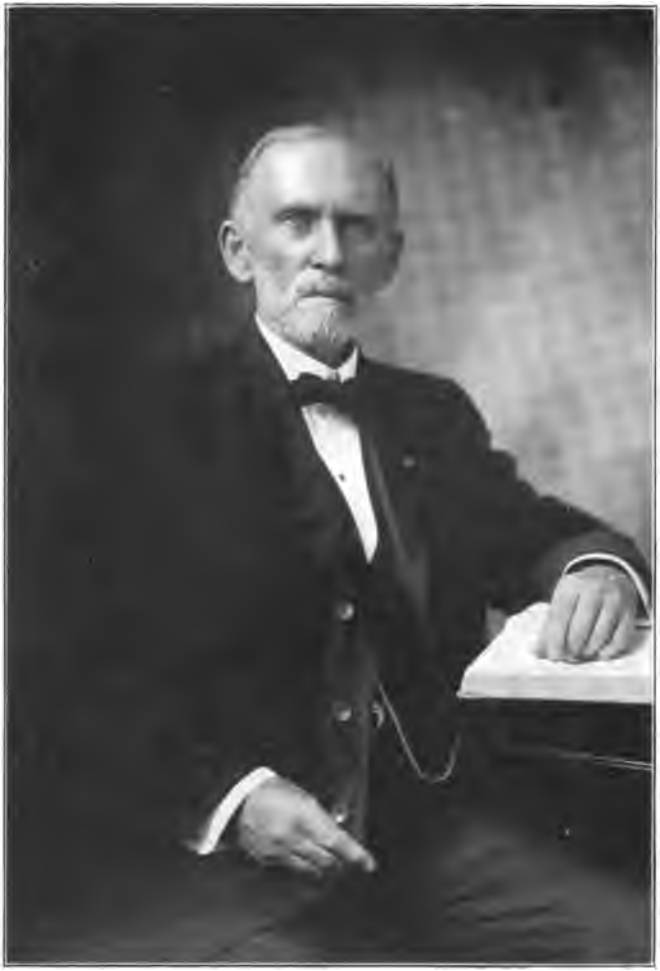
"Who learns and learns but does not what he knows,
Is one who plows and plows but never sows."

Governor of Maine

NBY

Wright





Abiel Holmes Wright

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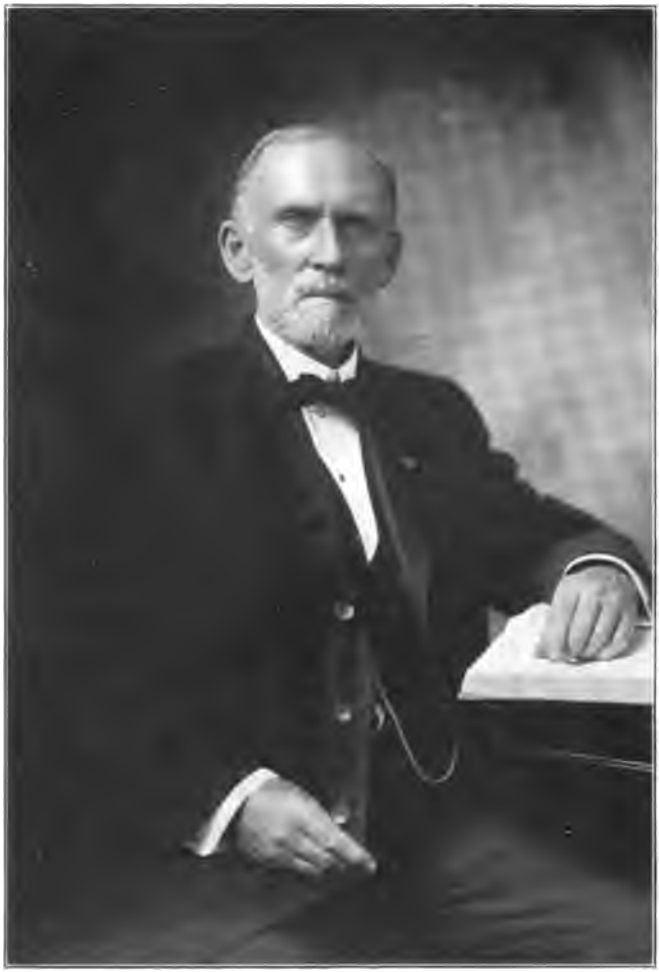


Abiel Holmes Wright

Y, SONG

STORY, SONG

AND

SERMON

with

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

by

REV. ABIEL HOLMES WRIGHT, A. M. *(Bowdoin)*,
Pastor Emeritus St. Lawrence Church
(Congregational)

PORTLAND, MAINE
THE LAKESIDE PRESS
MCMXI

THE LAKESIDE PRESS — H. CROCKER, LINOTYPE
PORTLAND, MAINE

TO MY FRIENDS,

helpers of my ministry of forty-six years—surviving parishioners of my two pastorates—financial supporters of my work as City Chaplain of Portland—members of Cumberland County Prison Association, who furnished funds in aid of my work among the prisoners of the county jail—to all whose confidence, counsel and sympathy have strengthened and encouraged me in my ministerial life; and to Charles D. Sias of Boston, my brother-in-law, friend of my early manhood, and comforter of my old age,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

The seventy-second year of my life is now drawing near its close. The shadows of declining age are deepening across my pathway, but peace and joy abide.

ABIEL HOLMES WRIGHT.

FOREWORD.

A sweet, godly, loving, helpful life is the noblest and rarest production of the Christian faith. It is such a life that has taken a part of itself and bound it between these covers.

Denominated the St. John of the Cumberland Congregational Conference many years ago, the appellation has gained in significance as the years have passed over the head of Mr. Wright and those who knew him in the days of his multitudinous activities.

Mr. Wright's parish was a large one. It extended far beyond the membership of the St. Lawrence society. No one who ever came to him in need of spiritual or material help was ever turned away and thousands have found in him their only approach to religious help and consolation. In his city chaplaincy he merely found official endorsement for the work he had done for many years. All over the world today may be found men whom he has helped to better living, way-farers and wanderers whom he has aided with prayer, precept and pecuniary assistance. In his work in the City Home among the diseased and poverty-stricken, he carried hope to the hopeless and comfort to the comfortless, both in the message of the Sabbath and in personal interview. No one not endued with the spirit of Christ could have so tirelessly and lovingly assumed such a ministry. To any other soul not so endowed it would have been perfunctory and cold duty.

Neither the splendid building of St. Lawrence Church nor this little book is his chief monument, but that monument "more enduring than bronze," the love and esteem of "the least of these, my brethren."

As to this little book it presents a very small portion of the activities of a long and industrious career, for the friends who have known and loved him. "The style, that is the man," and between the lines of every page may be read the simplicity, the earnestness and the sweetness that have characterized Abiel Holmes Wright.

I count it one of the greatest privileges of my life to have known him, and one of the greatest inspirations of my ministry to have him as my pastor emeritus, and a brother beloved.

CLIFFORD SNOWDEN.

Study of St. Lawrence Church.
Portland, Maine.

CONTENTS

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

At the suggestion of a clerical and literary friend, in whose wisdom and judgment I have great confidence, the following autobiographical sketch has been prepared for this volume.

Possessing neither diary nor journal of my life experiences and labors, I have depended, almost entirely, upon personal recollections, presuming that the most important events in the writer's long life will be, in the effort, spontaneously recalled.

From David Nevins Wright, born in Plymouth, N. H.. in 1814, I inherited my worthy name. In his early manhood my father came to Cambridge, Mass., and established himself in the trade of carpenter and builder. There is at the present time, in that city, a street called Wright Street, named after my father, who laid it out and erected dwellings upon it. This must have been soon after my father's marriage in 1839 to Ann Maria Tolman, who was born in Boston in 1813, and was, in her girlhood, lady's maid to the widow of Rev. Abiel Holmes, D. D., father of the poet Oliver Wendell Holmes.

My mother on March 10, 1840, presented to my father a pair of twins, who were named respectfully David Nevins and Abiel Holmes. For two reasons I have always been proud of my name. That given me by inheritance has ever been an inspiration to live up to its ethical significance; and that bestowed upon me in baptism has been an incentive to imitate the Christian virtues of the man of God who bore it before me.

One of my earliest recollections is of our family removal from Spring Street, in my fourth year, to the Holmes mansion back of the triangular common, close to Harvard University, and now the site of the Harvard Law School. I distinctly recall that David and I,—the tottling twins,—drew the baby carriage, with the andirons in it, from Spring Street to the Holmes mansion.

Concerning the Old Lady Holmes I have many distinct and grateful memories. Often she would stand before us with her hands, containing some gifts for our delight, held behind her back and her face beaming with kindness upon us, saying, "David, which will you choose, or Abiel, which will you choose,—right or left hand?" and always we shared alike in her benefactions. Oliver Wendell had a younger brother, John, who lived with his mother. He played on the piano, and the twins often crawled up the stairs to hear the music. All through my life in my childhood, my youth, and my clerical manhood, John Holmes was my friend, ever bestowing upon me his small gifts. He never outgrew the amiable habit.

In 1847, my father and his younger brother, Parker, then employed in Charlestown, purchased together a farm in Orford, N. H., and, in my seventh year, our family removed to that town. One incident I recall of this great change in our family life. Our large team-horse, Charlie, was harnessed into a hayrack piled high with our household effects. When I saw old Charlie pull that monumental load of furniture out of our door-yard he commenced a journey of 169 miles. The family soon followed after on the cars, which conveyed us as far as the railroad had then extended into New Hampshire. We were left 25 miles from our future home, to accomplish the remainder of the journey by country stage. That was in the autumn of 1847.

In 1849 my father died, while absent in Cambridge on business concerns. His death was sudden, and he died before my mother reached his bedside. Nothing, in all my life-history ever made a stronger impression on my mind and heart than the death of my father. Beside his dying bed, sat his former Cambridge pastor, the Rev. Dr. John A. Albro, who, from my father's lips indited a letter to his wife and children, after which, before sinking into the slumber of death, he repeated the closing verse of Dr. Watt's immortal hymn:—

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are;
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

That solemn letter breathing counsel and consolation to his wife and children, bestowing upon them his blessing, and committing them to the Heavenly Father's care, was often read by my mother to her children, and always there came into my heart a solemn vow,—a childlike consecration of myself to God. I still possess it and read it as one of my most precious treasures. Its influence upon my life can never be measured. I have sometimes been asked the question, "When were you converted?" and I have replied, with positive assurance, "When I was nearly nine years old." Often I have recalled my childhood's vow, and the thought would arise in my soul, "My father wanted me to be a Christian, and I will be."

Upon the death of my father his brother, Parker, came into full possession of the farm, and my mother remained in the old weather-beaten and blackened farm house, keeping house for herself and children. Annie Maria was born after my father's death, the only daughter in a family of six children. Two sons died in Cambridge and two in Orford.

At the age of thirteen my twin brother died, leaving mother, my child sister, and myself, to compose the family.

Soon after my father's death, the twins were legally placed under the guardianship of my Uncle Parker, who was always as a father to me. At the age of fourteen he released me from guardianship, and my mother returned with her family to Cambridge, where we occupied the house on Wright Street in North Cambridge, which my father erected. This change was made that I might secure better school advantages than Orford afforded, and that my mother might be nearer to her relatives.

At the age of nearly fifteen I entered the grammar school of Cambridge, then under the tutorship of William Ladd, a pre-eminent teacher. But changes in my mother's financial condition soon compelled me to leave school. I then entered the employ of my neighbor, John A. Whipple, daguerreotypist and photographer, in Boston. Soon after the firm became Whipple & Black, and I remained with them for seven years, or until 1862. During these years I devoted my evenings largely to study and to solid reading. I was taught my first lessons in Latin at the Young Men's Christian Association of Boston in its evening school. In Greek I got my start with the help of my pastor, Rev. William Carruthers, minister of the Holmes Chapel Congregational Church of Cambridge. Later, I joined the Winthrop Debating Club, in which a retired teacher residing in North Cambridge, named Sawyer, was deeply interested. He, noting my efforts to educate myself, offered to give me gratuitous instruction in Latin. It was also under the kindly and helpful counsel of this philanthropic teacher that I was encouraged to develop my elocutionary powers. To this valued friend, and to the Winthrop Debating Society, I owe a lasting debt of gratitude.

About this time my third great sorrow came to me. At the age of six years my sister Annie was taken away. At this time my mother was often absent from home, occupied as a nurse, and the care of my little sister had devolved largely upon me. Although I relinquished all hopes of high school and college privileges, yet I kept up my studious habits.

When I reached the age of eighteen, I began seriously to think of Church membership. This was prior to the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Carruthers. A young graduate of Andover Theological Seminary was supplying the Holmes Memorial Church, and I was one of a band of fifty young Christians who united with the Church. Mr. Dwight, son of Dr. William T. Dwight, was an unordained man, and another clergyman received us to the Church. During that service I stood beside a young woman whose name was Sophia C. Sias. We sang together from the same hymn-book. I recall that the hymn we sung contained this verse:—

'Tis done, the great transaction's done;
I am the Lord's and He is mine;
He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

And I also recall how her sweet alto voice penetrated my soul. This sketch will record in its place my marriage to that young woman in 1866.

The next important event in my life history was my enlistment in the Union Army of the United States, as a member of Co. A of the 47th Massachusetts regiment of Infantry. I will narrate the story. One evening in the mid-summer of 1862, I attended a war meeting at Lyceum Hall in Harvard Square. Eminent men were present, with fiery eloquence to induce Old Cambridge young men to be-

come recruits for the army, as nine months men. It was a very enthusiastic meeting, and a Cambridge company was largely made up of those who enlisted then and there. If my memory is not at fault, our war-governor, John A. Andrews, was present among the speakers. I felt the war-fever burning in my soul, and three of my friends, two of whom were my cousins, one by kinship and one by marriage, came to me and said, "Abiel, if you'll go we will!" I had been held back by thoughts of my widowed mother, but this was more than I could bear. Promptly I went forward, signed my name, and my companions followed me. We all went together in Co. A, 47th Regiment, and we all returned together, after a full year's service. My act was sharply criticized, and greatly deplored by the friends of my mother, but she never complained. She spoke of it to our beloved physician, Dr. Morrill Wyman, who was with my mother at my birth, and he said, "Abiel has the honor of enlisting, but he must not be permitted to go. All the old Cambridge recruits will come to me for medical examination, and I will not pass Abiel on account of his deafness." The doctor's benevolent scheme might have worked well, and I might have been satisfied, but it came to my ears, and I secretly slipped down to Cambridgeport, with my cousin, and we both were passed by Dr. Webber. This medical examiner discovered my deafness and said, "Do you really wish to go to war?" and I replied, "I do, for three of my friends are going because I go." This seemed a strong point in my favor, and he passed me, saying, "Your deafness will not prevent your being a good soldier." So I was permitted to go. The question whether I owed the larger duty to my mother, or to my country, I have never been able to solve. My mother became reconciled to my enlistment, and a kind providence spared me to be her protector and provider for

thirty-one years after my return, and twenty-seven of those years she dwelt in my own household.

The 47th Massachusetts Regiment was speedily formed and went into camp, first at Boxford, Mass., then at Readfield, Mass., and finally, late in the year, at Jamaica, L. I., where General Banks' second expedition was made up, and after we had suffered much in zero weather in tents and in barns, as lodging places, we were taken on board of the transport Mississippi, and sailed away for New Orleans. The voyage occupied ten days, and was full of interesting and exciting incidents. I think I suffered more on that voyage for my country, than in all my campaigning. One sweet and refreshing relief came to me while we were sailing up the Mississippi and nearing New Orleans. Scows loaded with oranges were moving down the river, and when they passed our ship oranges were hurled on deck by the scores. Fortunately I caught one, and I was not generous enough to share it with a fellow soldier. No! I devoured it! Oh! how good it was! Passing New Orleans we were landed at Carrolton near sundown, and hastily prepared our camp, pitching our tents without trenching them. In the night a fearful thunder storm descended upon our camp, which occupied low land, and it became a pool of water. We all got drenched to the skin. The next morning we were drilled until our clothes dried upon our backs.

After a short time we were marched back to New Orleans, which was our destination, but mistaken orders sent us down the river to the forts, which Farragut passed. No room for us there, neither food nor lodging. So we camped on the paved yard of the fort, and in the morning were marched back to New Orleans and lodged in a cotton press. Two companies of the regiment were sent with General Banks upon the unfortunate Red River expedition, and the rest were assigned for guard duty in and around the

city. My fortune was to be in a small squad sent to guard the United States Mint, and for some weeks I stood day and night on guard where General Butler hung the man who pulled down the United States flag from the tower of the Mint. Next we were joined with others, making a larger squad to stand guard at the Commissary Department of the Gulf. Finally after other changes the companies were all brought together for picket duty beyond Carrolton, and placed behind the parapet—the earthworks thrown up by the rebels extending from the Mississippi river to the marshes of Lake Pontchuabrain. Our picket line extended through La Barr's Plantation of 2000 acres grown up with tall weeds, and crossed by roads ditched deep on both sides. In this dismal place I stood on the picket line until near the end of our service, when I was summarily removed and placed in our regimental hospital where I ended my military life as a soldier. Let me epitomise the story of my removal from the picket line. One pitch dark night the sentinel sent to relieve me approached me from behind, and when near enough to hear my footsteps he challenged me three times and I made no response. Becoming alarmed he brought his rifle to his shoulder and cocked it. Just at that moment I was led to say out loud, "It must be time for the relief to come," and his fears vanished, and he came forward. The incident was reported to Colonel Marsh, and I was removed from the picket line and transferred to the regimental hospital. My experience in the hospital was helpful to me, as a preparation for ministerial work. An incident will illustrate. One sick soldier I daily ministered unto was evidently nearing his end. I observed that he frequently drew from under his pillow a daguerreotype at which he would gaze long and tenderly, sometimes tearfully. At length he grew too weak to reach for it, and I held it before his eyes It contained portraits of his wife and three children. My

last service to that dying soldier was to hold up the daguerreotype before his eyes. How unspeakable was the sacrifice that soldier made for his country.

Soon after the joyous news reached us that Port Hudson had surrendered, and later that Vicksburg was taken, and the 47th Massachusetts, with the 28th Maine, were transported by boat up the Mississippi to Cairo, and from thence in freight cars to Albany, N. Y., from whence to Boston we were supplied with a passenger train. Worn by sleeplessness and fatigue we paraded the streets of Boston, were feasted at Faneuil Hall, and marched to our respective homes, Co. A, to Old Cambridge. How gladsome was the welcome home! How joyous the greetings of relatives and friends!

My absence of one year in the Union Army seemed to many of my relatives and friends an unfortunate occurrence, delaying my work of preparation for the ministry, but to myself it has ever seemed as a very important part of my training for that sacred profession. In my military life I came into close association with all kinds of humanity, and had exceptionally good opportunities to know and to study different types of human character. This was to me often a sad revelation. Young men, and married men, whom I knew as citizens and respected, revealed themselves to me by their conversation and habits as utterly unworthy of respect or confidence, while others who seemed most indifferent to public opinion yet proved themselves strong in principle and loyal to conscience. My one year of observation and comparison of human characters vastly increased my practical knowledge of humanity, and as well my charity for the weak and tempted. And this knowledge was a valuable preparation for my work as a minister of Christ among men. It was far more valuable and helpful than a year's training in theological science.

And, now, before closing this rapid sketch of my army life in Louisiana, I will speak of some of my Christian activities among the negro refugees of New Orleans,—"contrabands" they were called.

Above our quarters on the Levee in that city one of the largest cotton presses was occupied by some fifteen hundred of these refugees, and it was known as the Contraband Press, and in a large river boat moored by the levee near our lodging place many negroes were lodging, being utilized as stevedores on the levee. Among these my cousin comrade, A. H. Clark, and myself formed a temporary school. Procuring alphabet charts and primers we began to teach them to read. We found them eager to learn and we became greatly interested in the work. But soon we began to receive anonymous notes of warning informing us that if we did not quit trying to educate the "niggers" our bodies would be found floating down the river. This, however, did not cause us to give up our efforts, but we carried our arms with us, and kept on in the work. But the matter being reported to our officers we were ordered, by our colonel, to desist in the work, which order we were compelled to obey. This, however, did not prevent our going among the refugees of the cotton press. There we started a Sunday evening service and I was aided in the work by a comrade named Kirkwood, who, like myself, was contemplating the ministry as a profession. He led the singing and, for the most part, I did the preaching, if I may so characterize my endeavors to instruct them in the way of life and salvation. We had large and enthusiastic audiences, all standing through the service, joining hands and swaying themselves backward and forward during their uproarous singing. There was no lack of interest or enthusiasm during the service. This work was terminated by the reunion of the

companies of our regiment for picket duty beyond the parapet.

After my return home I was sick for weeks with malaria fever. In October following I entered the theological seminary in Bangor, and pursued a course of three years. During the summer of 1864, with five other students I entered the service of the Christian commission, spending two months in hospitals of Washington, D. C., and at City Point, Va., while General Grant was operating before Petersburg.

During the brief period of my work in Virginia I saw more of the sufferings and horrors of the Civil War, than during all my nine months' service in Louisiana.

The experience I gained in my work in military hospitals, both in Washington and at City Point, Va., was also a valuable contribution to my work in the ministry. I can never efface from my memory the terrible scenes of suffering and sorrow I witnessed. Nor shall I ever cease to be grateful that I was permitted to render ministerial service to the wounded, sick and dying, who were called upon to endure such pains and agonies for the preservation of our country's integrity and unity.

The following October I returned to Bangor to begin my last year's study at the Theological Seminary.

At the close of the academic year I accepted a commission from the secretary of the Maine Missionary Society to supply the Congregational Church in North Deer Isle.

One Saturday afternoon I began my journey to Sedgewick, where I was to take the boat for Deer Isle. On the way down the river to Orland, where I was to supply the church on Sunday, I saw from the top of the stage coach the beautiful village of Winterport. Its long street of white houses, shaded with trees, and its picturesque church, on the terraced hillside, charmed me, and I mentally said, if I

might begin my ministry in a quiet village like that, I should be satisfied, never dreaming that God's providence would lead my steps into that village for my first pastorate.

At Orland I received a cordial reception from Dea. John Buck and his amiable wife. There I preached morning and afternoon my only two sermons. In the evening, sitting in the parlor with Mrs. Buck, I remarked that I almost feared to appear at North Deer Isle with only two sermons for an eight weeks' supply. The good woman understood my anxiety and timidity, and gave me both counsel and comfort. "I'll tell you what to do," she said. "You give them the sermon you preached for us in the morning, and, in the afternoon talk about your religious experience. The second Sunday you preach your other sermon in the morning, and give them your experiences in the war at the evening service." That was admirable counsel and I followed it, and found, as she had said I would, that having got in touch with my congregation I should find sermon themes and thoughts readily coming to me. I gratefully recall, after forty-six years have passed away, the wisdom and encouragement of that good woman.

One morning near the close of my studies at Bangor Seminary there came a sharp rap at my room door. "Come in!" I cried, and a tall young man entered, who asked, "Is this Mr. Wright?" "That's my name, sir," I replied. "Please be seated." As he took the offered seat, he said, "I have come from Winterport to ask you to preach for us next Sabbath?" Instantly, I thought of my reflections on the top of the stage. Well! the result was the following Saturday I enjoyed another stage ride, down the other side of the river to Winterport. And in October, 1866, I began my first pastorate in that village.

On November 13, I was married in Cambridge, Mass., to Miss Sophia Chamberlain Sias. On the morning of the

14th we began our pleasant residence in Winterport During the first year of my pastorate I supplied the church at Frankfort Mills also, preaching there on Sunday afternoons. After that the Winterport people raised my salary to $1000, and claimed all my service. The church membership was small, but the parish was financially strong, and the congregation large. Never pastor had a more appreciative and thoughtful people, nor have I ever spent happier years in the ministry, than those of my first pastorate. The ties then formed have never been broken. My severance from them, at the end of 1870, was caused by the poor health of my wife. Three sons were born to us there, and there two of them died, in their infancy. There we experienced our first joys in our Christian service, and there our first great sorrows were suffered.

I recall with grateful emotions the thoughtful and loving ministrations of my Winterport parishioners at the time of our bereavement. I have never ceased to love the people among whom the first five years, nearly, of my long ministerial life were so happily spent. Few of them are now living. At a recent brief visit to Winterport I visited one of the strongest, ablest, and most devoted of those helpers, Mrs. Harriet N. Abbott. This aged woman had long been an invalid, nearly bereft of hearing, and I wrote all my conversation to her. She has recently passed away. She was foremost among that body of faithful Christian women who were the helpers of my ministry in Winterport, and herein I gladly record my debt of affection and gratitude to them all.

My first visit to Portland was in 1866, a few weeks after the great fire. With mournful interest I walked amid its still smoking ruins. I was on my way home to Cambridge, after my graduation from Bangor Seminary. My next visit was four years and three months later, when I came from

Winterport to preach as a candidate for the St. Lawrence Street Church. After two weeks I came again on December 10, 1870. My call to the pastorate and acceptance of it soon followed. On January 1st, 1871, my ministry began, and the installation service followed on April 19th. The Moderator of the Council was the Rev. Dr. J. J. Carruthers, then pastor of the Second Parish Church, of Portland, and Rev. E. P. Thwing, first pastor of the St. Lawrence Church, was its scribe. The installation sermon was delivered by Rev. William Carruthers, my former pastor in Cambridge, then of Calais, Me., and my friend. The Rev. E. Y. Hincks of the State Street Congregational Church of Portland, now professor of the Theological School in Cambridge, gave me the solemn charge, and the right hand of fellowship I received from the late William F. Ober, then pastor of the West End Church, in Portland, who had recently received the right hand of fellowship from myself. I recall the solemnity of that occasion and of its powerful impression on my mind. I felt, in the depths of my soul, that I was divinely dedicated to the service of God, as the minister of the St. Lawrence Street Church, and there was in my heart a solemn consecration of myself to its work and welfare; and now, after nearly forty-six years of continuous service as a minister of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ I recall those solemn vows of consecration, and rejoice in the pleasant memories of my long pastorate in Portland. When I entered upon that pastorate, in the original house of worship, on St. Lawrence Street, I found myself surrounded by a strong band of Christian workers. Able and earnest men, and wise and devoted women. They bore the church on their hearts. They distinguished themselves by their fidelity to their covenant vows. They were imbued with a deep abiding evangelistic spirit. They loved each other fervently; and they stood behind, before and all round

their young pastor. There were among them able leaders, recognized and honored for their faith and fidelity. The spirit of those men and women gave to the church a gracious celebrity in the city.

On March 28, 1873, my wife died in Cambridge, Mass., in the home of her only sister, whither she had gone with hopes of restoration to health. Her removal was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. At first, it seemed impossible for me to resume my work in Portland. It was mainly through her counsel and encouragement that I was led to undertake the work of the ministry. Upon her I had leaned for council and aid. She had greatly endeared herself among my parishioners, both in Winterport and Portland, and her removal was felt, by my people, as a great calamity. Complying with wise counsel of my friends I was in my pulpit on the Sabbath succeeding her funeral.

In the Spring of 1873, the original house of worship was enlarged and greatly improved at a cost of $6000, and in the Spring of 1874 a quiet but powerful work of grace began, resulting in large accessions to the church and a great increase of its hopefulness and courage. Thirty-eight persons were added to the church at the May Communion following, thirty of them on confession of faith, and the rest by letter from other churches. Among the latter came Mr. and Mrs. Edmond S. Hoyt from the Central Church in Yarmouth. Mr. Hoyt was, as long as he lived, a most useful member, teaching the largest Bible Class of the Sabbath School. He belonged to the book firm of Hoyt, Fogg & Donham, and for several years edited a Sunday School journal of superior excellence. To Mr. Hoyt I am deeply indebted for the stimulus I received from close association with him, both in church work and in literary acquirements. He desired my assistance in the work of *The Bible Union Teacher,* and encouraged me to contribute to its columns.

He died on January 22, 1886. Twenty-three of that thirty-eight have passed away from earth, and only three of them are resident with us to-day.

The decade of years from 1874 to 1884 was perhaps the most successful period of my ministerial work in Portland. From 1871 to 1882 I preached both morning and afternoon. In 1882 the 3 P. M. service was suspended for the summer and this led to the establishment of an Open Air service at 5 P. M. This service was held at the corner of Quebec and Howard Streets, and was continued every Summer until 1897, a period of fifteen years. Large audiences were drawn to this popular service. In this work the pastor was liberally aided by the Portland pastors, and frequently by visiting clergymen from other cities. The young people of the St. Lawrence Christian Endeavor Society rendered excellent service in the supply of the music. This organization was formed in 1882.

I gratefully recall this long continued effort to supply the community with free gospel privileges, and have had abundant evidences that these open air meetings accomplished much good. They were continued until September, 1897. In this same year, 1882, a new church manual was adopted. In the preparation of this work I was ably assisted by Edmond S. Hoyt, who had been elected to the office of church deacon, and by Henry H. Burgess, afterward elected deacon of the church. I gratefully record my obligation to these departed brothers of the church for counsel, sympathy and valuable assistance.

I pass now to make a somewhat extended reference to an epochal event in my ministry, and in the history of the St. Lawrence Church. An event longed for and prayed for,—the erection of a new church edifice. For years I had offered my petitions for a better sanctuary, more centrally located in the community. So much did I plead for it, in

my pulpit prayers, that I was asked by a worthy Christian woman to cease making that petition in my public prayers. I promised a respite, but continued my appeals in private.

At an adjourned meeting of the St. Lawrence Parish on January 22, 1889, the first action was taken in reference to the matter of building a new church edifice, and a subscription fund of nearly $5000 was raised, but, for lack of general support, the undertaking was relinquished. This proved to be a providential failure, for had the movement succeeded, we probably should be worshipping in a new and improved church building on St. Lawrence Street. Five years passed away, and nothing more was done. Not until September 25, 1895, was any further parish action taken on the matter.

Previous to this time I had earnestly called attention to the so-called skating rink lot, corner of Congress and Munjoy Streets, as the most desirable location for the new church edifice.

Deacon Arthur C. Libby, a real estate agent, learning that this property was to change hands, informed me of the situation, and said he would purchase it for the Parish if made sure of its endorsement. I advised him to interview certain members of the parish and get their approval, and then go ahead. This was done. It was mid-summer. There was no time to get parish action. Certain individuals, prominent as church and parish leaders, consulted together, and decided to purchase the lot and hold it as a prospective church site, even if the parish should disapprove. The lot was secured by Mr. Libby paying down $100 to bind the bargain. The purchase price was $3,500. Mr. Libby's receipt for that $100 bears date September 18, 1895 —a memorable day in the history of our church building enterprise, for Mr. Libby's prompt action on that day made the erection of this edifice possible. He probably never had

an opportunity to do a greater service to this parish and community than he rendered by his wise and disinterested enterprise in this matter. The five gentlemen of the parish who supported him in his proposal and action have also laid the St. Lawrence people and the entire community under a lasting debt of gratitude to them.

Another fortunate, not to say providential fact, concerning the securing of a church site, was that the adjoining lot, needful to complete the church site, was the property of a member of the parish, who was willing to surrender it for this purpose. Deacon John Cousens sold his lot to the parish upon which he had hoped to erect a new home for himself. Failure to secure this lot would have defeated all plans and endeavors. In all these fortunate circumstances I clearly discern the hand of Divine Providence working with us in our new church enterprise.

On January 1, 1896, occurred the 25th anniversary of the union between the pastor and people of this church and parish. On the morning of that day I reviewed the long period during which minister and people had walked and worked together in harmony and said: "We have undertaken a great work. The site for a new church edifice has been secured. The enterprise is begun, when our eyes shall behold its completion none can predict. 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.' Let us go forward in the way He is leading us—believing that if we do worthily what the Lord gives us to do and makes possible for us to do we shall have His benediction and the unfailing grace of His help."

On January 7, 1896, occurred the annual parish meeting, but there is no recorded reference to the matter of building, but at an adjourned meeting held June 22 the parish action showed that the subject was in the public mind. At this meeting a building committee of six was appointed, consisting of Benjamin Thompson, Henry F. Merrill, A. C. Libby,

R. S. Davis, John Cousens and W. L. Blake. Subsequently three others were added to this committee, viz: George L. Gerrish, Charles L. Jack and Samuel H. Thompson. These gentlemen had already been appointed to solicit subscriptions in the parish.

The records of the next parish meeting reveal the energy and the efficiency of this building committee.

Its chairman reported that $15,000 had been secured by the persistent efforts of the members of the committee, aided by the pastor. Of this amount $10,300 had been subscribed by members of the parish and society and $4,700 from friends outside. First, six gentlemen, all members of the church, and all save one, members of the building committee, gave each a subscription of $500. The first of these six subscriptions was given, I believe, by our aged brother, so long our church treasurer, the late John J. Gerrish. Closely following these six subscriptions came three $1000 subscriptions from the sons of the late John F. Randall, who was a life-long friend and supporter of this parish. When the parish subscriptions had reached $10,000 I began to solicit aid outside the parish. The first subscription I obtained was an unconditional one of $500 from D. W. Clark. The second one for the same amount was the gift of Mr. Wm. W. Brown, who wisely conditioned it on the raising of $24,000. Soon after Mr. Wm. W. Thomas gave his subscription of $1,000, adding to Mr. Brown's condition, "that the structure be of brick." I recall with deepest gratitude the fatherly kindness of this honorable and venerable citizen of Portland, whose benefactions have been large and many in behalf of worthy Christian and charitable enterprises. Frequently he visited in his carriage the new church during the process of its erection, and he lived to see it externally completed, and to express his admiration and satisfaction over the work to which he so generously contributed.

I come now to speak of Mr. Payson Tucker's subscription to the building fund of $1,500—the largest gift received from any one person. There is an interesting story connected with Mr. Tucker's munificent gift, which has never been told in public. I may relate it now that our noble benefactor is no more with us, except by the grace and benediction of his well remembered charities. The original design was to build this church of brick trimmed with granite. The late W. W. Thomas gave his subscription, as I said, on this condition that "the edifice be of brick." When one member of the building committee was interviewing Mr. Tucker concerning the matter of granite trimmings, he said, "Why not build of stone? If you will build of our granite I will make it as cheap as brick." Mr. Tucker's proposal was gratefully accepted by the parish and to him is due the fact that this church edifice is built of beautiful and durable granite.

Not long after Mr. J. S. Ricker gave a $200 subscription, which he subsequently increased to $500. The late Woodbury S. Dana also gave me a $500 subscription without solicitation. It will be noted that three of these five hundred dollar subscriptions came from members of State Street Congregational Church. From the parishioners of this church we received, in the aggregate, over $3,000. Messrs. C. H. Payson, Henry P. Cox, the late Weston F. Milliken, and Captain Benjamin Webster subscribing $200 each. The late Col. Edward Moore, who had subscribed $250 in the name of his wife, offered to give another hundred if I would go on with the work until enough should be raised to pay the entire cost of the edifice. Captain Benjamin Webster afterwards made the same generous proposition to me. From Mrs. J. B. Brown came a check for $150. Thirty-one of Portland's citizens outside of our parish, and mostly business men, gave each $100. Their names are too numer-

ous to mention. The whole number of subscribers to the building fund was 445, not including those who gave by weekly offering. Through this system came $1016 into the building fund. There were in all twelve subscriptions of $500 each. There were 14 $200 subscriptions; 49 $100 subscriptions; 39 $50 subscriptions; 98 $25 subscriptions; 94 $10 subscriptions; one $250 subscription; two $150 subscriptions. Total amount of subscriptions, $29,510; from St. Lawrence parish, $18,210; from friends outside, $11,300. This $11,300 includes church collections for our work. From Williston Church, $171; from State Street Church, $105; from Second Parish Church, $55; from High Street Church, $42.

It affords me great satisfaction thus to refer in this life-sketch to the generous aid these citizens of Portland extended to the St. Lawrence Parish, for the erection of its new church edifice.

The whole story of its building and adorning has not been told. There was manifested a public spirit of self-sacrifice in our community for this object.

The chime of bells, the melody of which on Sundays resounds over our fair city, was the munificent gift of William L. Blake in behalf of his family. The broad concrete walk which surrounds the edifice was the donation of Benjamin Thompson, and the weather vane which adorns its tower was presented by Henry F. Merrill; and there were other gifts I cannot recall. Six of the eight memorial windows, which adorn its interior, were contributed by the families of the deceased church members they memorialize. The others were presented by the Sunday School, and the Christian Endeavor Society of the church.

The parish vote to erect the new church was passed on June 1, 1896. On July 1, 1896, the ground was broken for the edifice, and the work was formally begun at twelve

o'clock on that day. The occasion was made memorable by appropriate public exercises in the presence of the building committee and a large gathering of spectators. Addresses were made by the chairman of the building committee, and Rev. G. D. Lindsay, then the pastor of the Congress St. Methodist Church. Prayer was offered by the pastor, who then proceeded to lift the first shovelful of earth, after which each of the building committee cast into the cart his shovelful, and so the ground was broken for the edifice.

On October 19th, at 2.30 o'clock, the corner stone was laid in the presence of a very large assembly of Portland citizens. The addresses made on that occasion by the chairman of the building committee and myself were published in full in the Portland *Press* of October 20, 1896.

In twenty-six days less than one year's time after the laying of the corner stone the new church was ready for dedication. This happy occasion was observed with elaborate services on the 23rd day of September, 1897.

My pastorate over the St. Lawrence Church continued until April 1903. Both church and parish voted strongly against the acceptance of my resignation, which was tendered January 18, 1903, but I declined to withdraw it. For thirty-two years and three months I was with them as their pastor. I am happy to abide with them now, as their pastor emeritus. In the St. Lawrence parish I hope to dwell as long as life lasts, and I trust in the beautiful world beyond, where Christ is, we shall all be accepted of him, behold his face, and dwell together, who have been laborers together in his church on earth.

When I began my ministry in Portland I was brought in contact with the Portland veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic, and soon after I received invitations to unite with the Portland Posts. The first came from Thatcher Post, and later Richard K. Gatley extended Post

Bosworth's invitation to me to become its member. These invitations I declined, and for nearly thirty years I was apart from union with the G. A. R. Finally, after repeated invitations I accepted the honor of membership and chaplaincy in Bosworth Post. In my associations with its members I have become personally acquainted with, and have rejoiced in the friendship and love of many of Portland's most excellent citizens.

Notwithstanding my increasing infirmity of deafness, which prevents me from participating in the business affairs of the Post, yet I have been retained for many years as its chaplain, attending its weekly regular meetings and officiating with its officers at the funerals of its departed members. After my withdrawal from the active pastorate, I was able to devote more time to service for the Post, and the good fellowship of my comrades has been both an inspiration and a comfort to me. This does by no means imply that my love for the Church is lessened, for that will never cease. It is my desire and my hope to dwell the rest of my mortal life, among my former parishioners on Munjoy Hill, and enjoy good fellowship with those who are now comparatively strangers to me. The brotherhood of Bosworth Post grows dearer, as I advance in years, and our membership diminishes, and I desire in this life sketch of my experiences, to give evidence of my love and gratitude to the old veterans who have manifested their interest in, and affection for, their chaplain in so many courtesies and kindnesses.

The G. A. R. men are fast decreasing in numbers. Each year separates from us those whose forms and faces were familiar and dear to us, and another decade will leave comparatively few of them to sustain the rites and ceremonies of the Order. May we grow more loving in our fellowship, and more helpful to each other, as the years go by.

From April 1st until near the close of 1903 I was without occupation. It was a long and beneficial rest for me. The summer was delightfully spent with my wife on Falmouth Foreside. I was frequently called into the city for funeral service, and sometimes responded to calls of the same nature in Falmouth.

Near the end of the year, Mayor F. E. Boothby proposed to the City Home Overseers that I be invited to take the office of City Chaplain, and be recognized as minister-at-large in the city. This proposition was made to me, and I gladly accepted the office, having decided, owing to my infirmity of deafness, not to assume the duties of another pastorate.

In the work which this office has opened up to me I have found great satisfaction. It has brought me into personal contact with many families in our city where I have rendered acceptable and helpful services. I have found much pleasure in ministering to the inmates of the City Home, both as preacher and visitor. For nearly eight years I have preached Sunday afternoons at 3 o'clock to the City Home audiences, and have visited its inmates and the City Hospital once each week, and have always been subject to call at all times. Each year I have submitted to the Portland people a report of my work in the public press. I intend to continue in this work as long as my services are acceptable to the Overseers of the Poor, and to the city authorities.

On April 1, 1903, I accepted the County Commissioners' appointment as Chaplain of the Cumberland County Jail. I held that position for seven years, resigning it on April 1st of the present year. I can truthfully affirm that more than half of my time and much more of my energy was devoted to the relief of the County Jail inmates. This work was made fruitful by the funds received from the Cumberland

County Prison Association of Portland, which were applied in aid of discharged prisoners.

Soon after the organization of this association, I became a member, and was made chairman of a Committee on Discharged Prisoners, and a fund was soon created for their relief. During the seven years of my chaplaincy hundreds of discharged prisoners received aid from this fund, and each month I reported my work of relief, and presented my bill of expense. Hundreds of dollars were expended in sending them to their homes, or where they could find work, and for clothing and lodging those in need.

My reluctant resignation of the jail chaplaincy was caused by nervous strain occasioned by my increasing deafness.

On the last day of 1910, at 7.30 A. M., my devoted and beloved wife passed away. Thirty-five years we had lived together in blessed companionship. Fourteen of those years she had suffered from failing health.

From the address of her pastor, Dr. Clifford Snowden, who had often ministered to her comfort by his presence, delivered at her funeral service, I quote, without permission, the following:—

"Clara Ellen Jack was born at Orr's Island, Maine, February 7, 1858, daughter of Thomas S. and Eliza T. Jack. She came with her parents to Portland at the age of six and spent all her subsequent life in this city. She passed through the Portland public schools but did not fully complete the high school course. After her school days she lived at home with her parents until 1875 when she was married to Mr. Wright. Her life then was merged in the life and work of her husband and in the life of the community which they jointly served. * * * * To her husband in his arduous work of a busy and varied ministry she was a tower of strength and a city of refuge. To her

care for and ministry to his comfort is attributable to a great degree the noble and self-sacrificing work he has been permitted to do for the city of Portland and its inhabitants of all degrees, denominations and races. Hers was a happy home wherein reigned love, and faith and hope. Hers was a quiet and unassuming career yet one that had many secret joys and enduring satisfactions. When the Lord of Life saw fit to terminate her earthly career He sent His good angel quickly and she was not for God took her. Among the thousands and tens of thousands of those who have lived lives not blazoned on the scrolls of earthly fame her name and deeds are recorded in the Lamb's book of Life."

In my grief and loneliness I give thanks to God for the precious boon of her presence in my home so many years. In her removal my hope of, and longing for, heaven have been increased, and also my purpose to bear life's sorrows patiently and heroically, realizing more than ever, that sorrow is one of God's most potent means of disciplining and perfecting the human soul, for future and eternal blessedness.

In bringing these reminiscences concerning the way the Lord hath led me and blessed me, to a close, I quote the words of St. Paul, as expressive of my own emotion excited by this review of my ministerial life. They are quoted from Timothy I:12: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." St. Paul looms before me, in his unparalleled service to Christ, as a minister of His Word. Preeminently he was the servant of Christ, yet I may employ his words to express my sense of obligation and gratitude to my Saviour who called me into the ministry of his gospel, and has enabled me to continue in it for so many years, and my hope is that, at last, when my ministry on earth is ended, I shall be counted, as his faithful servant,

notwithstanding all the deficiencies and defects of my service.

If this hasty and imperfect review of my life-experiences affords any satisfaction to my friends in Portland, or elsewhere, I wish them to know that but for the insistent desire and appeal of Dr. Clifford Snowden, it never would have been written; nor would the volume which includes it, ever have been published, apart from his suggestions, and assistance, in its preparation for the press. To his wise counsels, ministerial courtesy and brotherly love, I am deeply indebted and grateful.

ABIEL H. WRIGHT.

St. Lawrence Church, Congregational, Dedicated A. D. 1897

Christmas Stories

TOM LANE'S CHRISTMAS

OR

THE BETTER PLAN

TOM LANE'S CHRISTMAS

CHAPTER I.

THE BETTER PLAN PROPOSED.

On Saturday, one week before Christmas, the heaviest snowstorm of the season visited C———. At six o'clock in the afternoon it was already dark, and the street-lights were flickering in the fitful puffs of the rising wind which was busily employed piling the newly fallen snow in formidable heaps across the streets and sidewalks. Creaking signs, and rattling blinds gave ominous testimony to the force of the wind, and prophesied a wild night.

Many people were on the streets, and all seemed bent on getting home as soon as possible; laboring men with empty dinner pails, plowing their way through the deepening drifts; shop and factory girls bending with weary effort before the blasts; merchants, lawyers and clerks muffled in great coats, or long ulsters, treading in each other's footsteps along the narrow path which the snow and wind seemed to have contracted together to keep closed up.

Among the struggling pedestrians was a middle aged man of medium height, who, having reached the top of the long and gently ascending hill at the west of Main Street, paused a moment to recover his breath, and then turned into Maple Street, where a few doors below the corner, a light shone across his path, which streamed cheerfully from the casement of the parsonage belonging to the First Congregational church of the city. The doorplate of this house bore the name of Robert Townsend, which was that of our tired traveler. As the Rev. Mr. Townsend reached his

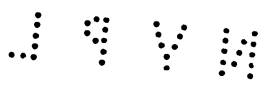
doorsteps an upward glance revealed to him a familiar face at the window, which immediately vanished, and the next instant the street door was swung wide open by the hand of his wife who greeted him with a volley of exclamation and questions uttered in a rapid and excited manner.

"Why, Robert, where have you been? What a wild night! How late you are! We almost feared you were buried in a snow bank! What can have kept you? Haven't you almost perished? I have been watching at the parlor window the last half hour. Our supper is almost spoiled by waiting." During these ejaculations Mrs. Townsend was energetically brushing the snow from her husband's coat, and assisting him to remove the heavy garment.

"The supper will be a good one, nevertheless, I am sure," replied Mr. Townsend, as he took off his overshoes. "It is a wild night," he added, as he passed into the dining-room and stood before the open grate, "and I am most thankful to get home. But, come my love, let us sit right down to supper. I am more tired than cold, and need nothing so much as a cup of your refreshing tea. I am very sorry to have kept you waiting so long, and more so to have caused you anxiety."

It was a pleasant family group that now surrounded the tea-table, upon which was spread a supper that had no appearance whatever of having been spoiled. A glance over that table was sufficient to prove that Mrs. Townsend was an accomplished housekeeper.

Had the supper been prepared for company, this might not have been true; but as an evening meal prepared for the family, the spotless tablecloth, the style and arrangement of the dishes, the appearance of the food, more than its variety or abundance, all testified to the refined tastes and superior management of the mistress of that household.



Four persons seated themselves at the table—father, mother, and two children—a lad of sixteen, bearing in his form and features an unmistakable resemblance to his father for whom he was named; and a sweet-faced blue-eyed girl of eight years, named Julia, whose profusion of soft brown hair, and blonde complexion reminded all observers of her mother.

There was a peculiar tone of thankfulness in Mr. Townsend's blessing before the meal, which both his wife and son observed.

"You are glad to get out of this cutting wind, I know, father," Robert said.

"I guess papa is hungry, and glad to get some warm supper," put in Julia, the household pet.

"I perceive that your father has some deeper cause for gratitude," quietly remarked their mother, as she poured the tea.

Mr. Townsend met his wife's glance with an appreciative smile. "Your fine perception has not deceived you," he said. "I have a special cause for gratitude to-night. I was thinking all the way home of God's goodness to me and mine."

"We should be pleased to know the special reasons for gratitude," his wife remarked, as she passed him a steaming cup of tea.

"And so you shall, my dear," responded her husband, "although it involves the narration of a very sad story. Robert, was not Mrs. Joseph Lane your Sunday-school teacher a few years ago?"

"She was," replied Robert, "and the best teacher I ever had, with all due respect for the ability of Dea. Garland, our present teacher. Henry Lyman and Dan Melcher were in the class, too, and so was William Willard. William and I

are the only members of that class who are now in the Sunday-school. Dan is away at college.

"Well, Robert, I have been in Mrs. Lane's home this afternoon, and a long tramp I have had through the snow," said Mr. Townsend.

"Why, papa!" exclaimed Julia, "you don't call that a long walk—only down to Cedar Street. I used to go to Susie Lane's house very often."

"The Lanes moved from Cedar Street more than three months ago. It was while I was away on my vacation, and I knew nothing of the change until this afternoon," resumed her father. They reside now at the extreme east end of the city, more than two miles from here."

"I am surprised to hear this," said Mrs. Townsend. "I wonder none of us have known of it. What caused them to leave their pleasant cottage on Cedar Street?"

"Last spring," replied her husband, Mr. Lane attended the Grand Army reunion at P———, and fell in with some of his old comrades, and through their influence he was led to resume his former drinking habits. You may never have known, Robert, that Tom Lane's father was a soldier, and that when the war was over, he returned home with habits of intemperance fastened upon him. Through Dea. Willard's efforts, Mr. Lane was reformed, and during the first year of my ministry here I married Mr. Lane to one of our most attractive and useful young ladies. Mrs. Lane was received into the church soon after her marriage. Well, to shorten the sad story, since last May, Mr. Lane's bad habits have been gaining very rapidly upon him, in consequence of which he lost his position as overseer in the Mendan Mills last August. He was, however, taken back on trial, but failing to keep his promise to Mr. Bentley, he was finally discharged, since which time, he has been unemployed."

"Who informed you of this, father?" asked Robert.

"Mr. Bentley himself. I called at his office to-day, and he showed me through the mill, and knowing that Mr. Lane had long been in his employ, I asked if I might see him. He then told me that he had given him every chance to reform, and that he could trust him no more. Further inquiry elicited the facts I have given, and I went immediately from the mill to Mr. Lane's home on Mechanic Street, hoping I might have an interview with him, but I failed to find him."

"How did you find Mrs. Lane?" asked Mrs. Townsend, anxiously.

"Poorly enough," replied her husband. "She seems utterly crushed and hopeless."

"Poor woman! My heart aches for her," said Mrs. Townsend. "I hope they are in comfortable circumstances."

"On the contrary, her husband replied, "the family are very poor; in fact, in need of immediate relief. Mrs. Lane is in feeble health, and she has a young babe scarcely four months old. She told me, with tears, that she could endure ill health and poverty, but the disgrace and shame of her husband's dissipation were overwhelming. She is distressed, also, on account of her son Thomas, who suffers deeply from the changed circumstances of the family."

"It's awful hard on Tom," remarked Robert, who had been a silent and deeply interested listener to the conversation. "Tom Lane was the best scholar in our class. He did not return to the High School after the summer vacation, and I hear that he has gone to work for Morton & Melcher."

"An excellent firm to work for," said his father. I am glad he has obtained a position there. But it is a thousand pities that he was compelled to leave school. His mother told me that he sorrows secretly over it, but is bravely trying

to keep up some of his studies, working hard over his Greek and Latin almost every evening."

"Tom has the true metal in him," said Robert. "He isn't a bit afraid of hard work, and he is the pluckiest fellow I know of."

"What do you mean by 'pluckiest'?" asked Julia, looking up into her brother's face.

"I mean, Miss Curiosity, that Tom has lots of fight in him. I tell you what, Sis, no fellow can walk over Tom Lane," Robert said, winking violently at his little sister.

"I shouldn't think, Robbie, that any fellow would want to walk on him," said Julia, wonderingly.

"Yes, there are chaps that would just like to, if they could, but you see, Julie, they can't. Tom isn't the boy to lay down and make a sidewalk of himself," said Robert, with no intention of relieving his sister of her mental perplexity.

"What is Thomas doing at Morton & Melcher's?" asked his father.

"Drudgery," replied Robert, shortly.

"Robert, give me a more satisfactory answer," said his father, with a slight tone of reproof.

"Dan Melcher told me, father, that Tom is store boy, office boy, attic boy, and cellar boy," answered Robert, with elaborate definiteness.

"Well, Robert, I dare say that he will be a seller boy, that is to say, a salesman, if he remains long enough in that store."

"Father," said Robert, clapping his hands, "that joke didn't need an explanation."

"I am sure I don't see any joke in that," said Julia.

"Oh, of course you don't, Julie, you are not old enough," answered her brother, laughingly. "Beauty and brightness don't always grow together, Julie."

"What wages does Tom have?" asked Mrs. Townsend of her husband.

"Three dollars a week," replied her husband, "and that amount has been the whole income of the family for the three months past."

"Why, that is barely enough to buy bread," exclaimed Mrs. Townsend. "I don't see for the life of me how they have lived on it."

"They have been sadly straightened," was Mr. Townsend's quiet reply.

"How have they been able to pay for rent and fuel?" asked his wife.

"They have already been warned out of their wretched dwelling, because their rent bill has not been paid for two months past. However, I have obtained the assurance of their landlord that they shall not be disturbed, on condition that I will be responsible for the payment of the rent due before the end of the year."

"Oh, papa, I am so glad," exclaimed Julia.

"I hope they are provided with fuel sufficient for this bitter weather," his wife remarked.

"Be comforted, my love, they will not suffer either for food or fire," her husband replied.

The supper was now ended, but the family continued sitting at the table, discussing the question of Mrs. Lane's relief, which conversation will occupy the next chapter, and bring to the mind of its readers the central theme of our story.

CHAPTER II.

THE BETTER PLAN ADOPTED.

After a moment of thoughtful silence, during which Julia hitched her chair around close to that of her father, Mrs. Townsend said, with anxiety in her tone, "I wonder, husband, how the Lanes will get through the winter."

"Jehovah-Jireh," was her husband's only response.

"What is 'Jover-Jiver'?" asked Julia.

"It's Hebrew, Julie," Robert answered wisely.

"Tell Julia its meaning, Robert," said his father.

"Beg your pardon, father, Hebrew is one of the dead languages I am not prefficient in," replied the facetious boy.

"Robert, if you were better acquainted with the English of the Old Testament, you might have answered Julie's question."

"Julie," added her father, 'Jehovah-Jireh', means: 'The Lord will see or provide.' The words may be found in the 22nd chapter of Genesis. The Hebrew words are the name of a place in the land of Moriah, where Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac. God provided a ram for the altar, and Isaac was spared, so Abraham called the place 'Jehovah-Jireh.' It is supposed to be the very spot where Christ was crucified, nearly nineteen hundred years afterwards. At all events, Christ is the Lamb of God, provided for our sacrifice. So they have a wonderful meaning. The Lord will provide for his people, and surely Mrs. Lane is one of them."

"That is a beautiful text, father; I mean to look it up for myself this evening. But, seriously, don't you think that in Mrs. Lane's case, some of the Lord's people ought to see and provide?" asked Robert.

"Doubtless, they should, my son."

"Won't the church take up the matter?" observed Mrs. Townsend.

"I really hope this will not be found needful, my dear; I would spare Mrs. Lane and her children the mortification of becoming the objects of church charity. They have certainly suffered humiliation enough."

"Cannot the benevolent funds of the church be privately and secretly applied for their relief?" asked Robert, who was beginning to take pride in the careful expression of his thoughts, although he was far from sustaining his best style on all occasions.

"There is not one dollar in the church treasury," his father replied. "Our Thanksgiving offering was insufficient, and we drew upon the treasury to meet the deficiency."

"Why not get up a donation for the family? A pound party would be a pleasant affair," remarked Robert.

"Very agreeable for the donors, but far less so to the recipients, I think," his mother added. "In their present condition, the Lane family could not be expected to enjoy such a visitation. I am sure I hope no party of that kind will ever visit the parsonage."

"A pound party is objectionable on grounds of economy, as well," remarked her husband.

"Then, a private subscription is the only alternative," Robert said.

"That might do, if no better plan can be proposed," quietly replied his father.

"I don't see any better way. I should be glad to solicit money for Mrs. Lane, and I am certain I could raise a large sum."

"I have no doubt of it, Robert, but I have thought of a better plan."

"O, do tell us what it is," Julie cried.

"It is such a simple plan that I fear it will disappoint you all," observed the pastor, looking into the face of his wife and children, with an inquiring expression on his own.

"I am really curious to know what your better plan may prove to be," his wife said.

"So am I, father," Robert put in quickly.

"But I fear you will not all approve of it," said Mr. Townsend, doubtfully.

"I shall 'prove of it,' if you do, papa," said Julie.

The minister smiled again upon the uplifted face of his pet child, and said to her, "Julie, you know that Christmas will be one week from to-day."

"Yes, papa, and I am so glad, but"—and here the child's voice was suddenly subdued, "but I guess Susie Lane will not be very glad. She won't have any money to spend for Christmas, will she, papa?"

"I'm afraid not, Julie. How much has my little pet got to spend?"

"Oh, papa, I have almost four dollars."

"How much do you need to make it four dollars?" asked Robert.

"Just ten cents, Robbie."

Robert, who had been fumbling in his pocket, suddenly tossed a dime into his sister's lap, saying, "that will make you four dollars, Julie. Now, you please remember that I shall expect you to add ten cents to the cash value of my present."

"Robert, my boy, what do your Christmas funds amount to?" asked his father.

"Just six dollars and a half,—every cent of it the reward of industry. Just look at the proofs of honest toil," said the lad merrily, as he displayed his open palms, revealing underneath each knuckle a bright red scar. "Blisters, you see. Got 'em splitting up oak slabs for widow Jerris, but she paid me well for the job."

"Robbie, you have done well to have saved so much," said his mother.

"Saved!" exclaimed the boy; "Why, mother, I have been a perfect miser for the past six months. But I will show you something for it, when we pick the fruit from our Christmas tree."

"Mrs. Townsend, it is now your turn to report," said her husband, giving his wife a significant look.

"I see clearly what you are aiming at," she replied; "and, if I must confess, my Christmas fund is unusually large this year, and so are my plans. You know, my dear, the wedding business has been uncommonly brisk of late. That dashing New Yorker, who carried off our parish belle, last month, left you, or, rather, left me, two shining ten-dollar gold pieces, and I have reserved them for Christmas uses. And now, Mr. Inspector, please inform us respecting the amount of money you intend to devote to Christmas gifts for your household pets and intimate friends."

"Exactly two-thirds of the amount I have reserved for that purpose; that is to say just sixteen dollars. The other third I have given to the Lord, as a real Christmas offering in honor of his nativity."

"Which means," rejoined his wife, "that you intend to devote the sum of eight dollars for the relief of the Lane family.

"You have divined my intention, my love, and I hope the revelation does not displease you," her husband said, bestowing an admiring glance upon his wife.

"No; it certainly does not displease me," his wife replied, but it gives me an idea respecting your plan for helping Mrs. Lane. You are thinking that we might, appropriately, observe Christmas by denying ourselves for her sake."

"For the Master's sake, I would rather say," her husband rejoined. "Ought we to spend all our Christmas funds on

our relatives and friends, when the Lord has appealed to us in the person of our suffering sister? Shall we call upon others to relieve her necessities before we ourselves have responded to the Master's call? What would the Lord have us do in this case? What would most honor His advent?"

"Your questions are serious, husband, and there is but one answer. We must heed the call. You shall not be more generous than I. One of my gold pieces shall be given to aid poor Mrs. Lane for the dear Master's sake," said Mrs. Townsend, with feeling.

"My dear wife, no special effort is required of you to surpass me in goodness," responded her husband, and the love of his heart beamed in his eyes, and was expressed in his voice.

"And now, Robert, what do you say to our better plan?" asked the glad-hearted father.

"I say it is a jolly way to relieve a fellow of some of his 'filthy lucre,'" replied his first-born. "I would like well enough to pass over half of my pewter to Tom Lane, but I would not dare to offer it to him. I know he would refuse it, and so would I, if I were in his place. But you may have three of my six-fifty for Mrs. Lane."

"Money isn't made of pewter, Robbie!" exclaimed Julia, who, thus far, had been a silent, but attentive listener to the conversation.

"No more it is, my chick of a philosopher; but it is a good enough name for the root of all evil, nevertheless," said Robert.

"You need not call me a chick, nor a 'losofer' either, Robert Townsend," retorted Julia, with some show of indignation.

"Never you mind Robbie's names; they won't hurt you, Julie. How much of your four dollars will you give for Jesus?" her father asked.

"Papa, I was going to buy just four handsome presents, one for you, one for mama, one for Robbie, and one for cousin Jane, but if you won't care, I will give it all to Mrs. Lane," answered the household pet.

"Now, Miss Julia Townsend, you don't mean it," said Robert, after giving a prolonged whistle of surprise.

"Yes, I do, Robbie, and if I could earn money as you can I would have more to give," Julia replied, warmly.

"Now, Julie, this is altogether too bad. You are the household beauty already, and that ought to satisfy you, without setting yourself up as the family saint," said Robert, with mock displeasure.

"Robert Townsend, I wish you would stop teasing," said Julia. "You needn't make fun of me, for I am in real earnest, and if I don't give you any present, I shall love you just as well if—if you will only be good."

"And I shall love you better," said Robert, jumping up from the table, and giving his little sister an affectionate kiss. "You may be a saint, too, Julie, if you want to. You have got the right material in you for one, and I will try and play second fiddle with good grace."

The family now arose from the tea table, and Mr. Tonwsend remarked, as he took the Bible from the table:

"We have actually raised for the Lord a fund of twenty-five dollars around our tea table. It shall all be given to aid the Lane family. As far as this family is concerned, my better plan is fully realized. Now, we will have evening prayers.

CHAPTER III.

DEACON WILLARD IS MOVED.

The brief prayer which Mr. Townsend offered in his home that evening, while the members of his family knelt beside their chairs, was peculiarly fervent and thankful. The minister's heart was overflowing with gratitude and joy. And when Mr. Lane's family was remembered at the throne of grace, and the fallen man was commended to divine mercy and help, each one of the household was conscious of a joyous uplifting of soul. Already each began to experience the blessedness which is the immediate and inseparable reward of true Christian sympathy and benevolence.

As was the custom, they sang together after the prayer. Sweetly and tenderly their voices blended in the words of Doddridge's familiar hymn:

> "Father of mercies, send Thy grace,
> All powerful from above,"

and when the third stanza was reached, there was genuine pathos mingled with the harmony:

> "When the most hapless sons of grief,
> In low distress are laid;
> Soft be our hearts their pains to feel,
> And swift our hands to aid."

Scarcely had the music ceased when the door bell rang violently, as if pulled by a nervous hand.

"Deacon Willard desires to speak with you, sir," said the servant, who, a moment later, ushered the visitor into the parlor.

"What brings you out this tempestuous evening, Deacon Willard?" asked Mr. Townsend, as he entered the parlor and warmly greeted his friend.

"The desire for a soft pillow and peaceful slumber tonight," replied the deacon, in a voice in which cheerfulness and anxiety were about equally blended.

"Come into my study, deacon; there is too much of the north wind in our parlor tonight for comfort," and so saying, the pastor led the deacon through the diningroom into an adjoining apartment, which was familiarly called by the family "Father's Den."

"You are but just through tea, I perceive. I fear I have called too early," said the deacon.

"Not a bit, Deacon," responded Mr. Townsend. "I was late home this evening, and we lingered about the supper table longer than usual. Pray, what threatens to keep you awake tonight? Nothing going wrong in the parish, I hope."

"No, there is not a disturbing ripple in church or parish matters, as far as I know. Possibly things are moving along too smoothly with us," the deacon replied. Then, after a reflective pause, during which Mr. Townsend stirred the fire a little, he added: "Mr. Townsend, have you seen Joseph Lane lately?" As he asked this question, little Julia came in quietly and stood by his side, as if sure of a kindly reception. The deacon's attention was at once diverted to his little friend, whom he lifted to his knee and saluted with a kiss, which evidently Julia expected.

"No, Deacon," Mr. Townsend replied; "I have not seen Mr. Lane since my return from my vacation. But, deacon, do you desire to be alone with me?" asked the minister, making as if he would take Julia from Mr. Willard's lap.

"Let Julie stay," answered the deacon; "there is no cause for secrecy in that I wish to say to you, at least, not from

any member of your family. I have learned to-day very sad and disheartening news about Mr. Lane, said Deacon Willard. After seventeen years of sobriety and respectability, he has gone back to his cups again. I had supposed him to be a thoroughly reformed man, and far beyond the peril of temptation. Indeed, I have regarded him as standing very near to the kingdom of heaven. I fear that I have failed in my duty to him. You never knew him as he was when he returned from the army. He was a good soldier, a thoroughly patriotic and right-minded man, save for his one evil habit of intemperance. Whiskey rations in the service, and bad associates, led him astray. I never worked harder to save a man from ruin in my life. I have for years prayed for his conversion. But he is gone now, and I fear his salvation, not to say his reform, is hopeless. I saw him this afternoon in a deplorable state of intoxication, and I learned that his family are in need," and here the good deacon's emotion overcame his utterance.

"His case is indeed desperate, but I trust it is not hopeless. Let us not think that he is forsaken of God, or beyond the reach of Christian influence. Perhaps this downfall may be the means of his conversion," the minister said, hopefully.

"God grant it may prove so! Mr. Lane is a very kind hearted man. He is lacking in will power, but he is generous to a fault. You, yourself, know that his liberality exceeds his means. No man has given more, in proportion to his ability, for parish expenses, than he. Though for a laboring man, his wages have been good, he has never laid up anything, and his family have nothing to depend on but the earnings of his boy, Tom, and they are very small."

"Deacon Willard, I visited Mrs. Lane this very afternoon," said Mr. Townsend.

"You did! and in this hard storm! Pray, tell me how you found the family? I intend to visit her to-morrow after the Sunday school," the deacon added.

Mr. Townsend now gave Deacon Willard a brief account of his interview with Mrs. Lane, and of the desperate condition of her family affairs. Whereupon, Deacon Willard rose, and said, excitedly, "It is a case that demands immediate attention. The church must take hold of this matter. Mr. Townsend, we must do something to-morrow in the congregation."

"Deacon Willard, sit down and calm yourself," said his pastor, gently pushing him back into his chair. Provision has been made for the family for the present. They are not wholly destitute of food or fuel. Tom brings home three dollars every Saturday night. Their greatest immediate trouble is with their landlord. No rent has been paid for two months, but I have obtained their landlord's promise not to disturb them for two weeks."

"You became responsible, I suppose, for the rent."

"Yes, it was necessary."

"For the whole amount due?"

"Yes."

"I will relieve you of that, Mr. Townsend. I am very glad you have befriended them," the deacon said. "Please tell me how much you have expended in their aid? It shall come out of the church treasury."

"No, Deacon Willard, I object to that. Is it really needful that their relief should become a matter of church charity? We have adopted a better plan for helping the Lane family," the pastor added.

"What, pray tell me, may this better plan be?" asked Deacon Willard.

Mr. Townsend was only waiting for the deacon to ask that question, and he proceeded in as few words as possible

to inform him how twenty-five dollars had been raised for Mr. Lane that evening around his supper table.

While her father was speaking, Julia had slipped from the deacon's arms, at the silent beck of her mother, who appeared at the door. But Deacon Willard did not notice her withdrawal, so absorbed was his attention in his pastor's words.

"I speak of this even to you, Brother Willard, with reluctance," his pastor continued. "You well know that I have publicly inculcated the beauty of unostentatious benevolence. The deeds of the right hand are ordinarily to be kept secret from the left hand. The principle of our Lord's precept on this subject is the only one that can redeem our charities from contempt, and give them a pure Christian quality. Secret alms giving may be as needful for spiritual culture as is secret prayer. I do not overlook or violate this great principle in speaking of this family matter to you. It is with the hope that my plan may be adopted by others, and that our Christian homes may become more the centers of Christian benevolence, that I am emboldened to tell you of my better plan. Does not this provide for the needy in a way that gives them not only the material aid they require, but with it the Christian sympathy and personal interest which are no less needful? And further, should not we all, by this method, get a happier Christmas for our own families?"

Deacon Willard listened to his pastor with thoughtful and downcast countenance, and when he raised his head, his eyes were moist with tears. "My dear Pastor," he said, "your plan is admirable. It honors both your head and your heart, and it reproaches me. I have, myself, had many, many misgivings about the Christianity of our Christmas customs. We have certainly gone far astray from a proper observance of the day, and it is getting to be worse and

worse. We have made Christmas a day of selfish mirth and joy. Our gifts of friendship and family affection are usually no more than the formal exchange of customary civilities and fashionable amenities of the season. It is not hard to teach children to give for Christ's sake. But how can we expect them to learn the lesson we have not ourselves mastered? Your plan is not only better, it is the best possible. I shall not sleep tonight until I have talked this thing over with Mrs. Willard. But I must go now. Say good night for me to Mrs. Townsend and Robert,—why! where is Julie?" The good Deacon was wholly unconscious of the disappearance of his little friend, who was then fast asleep in her bed. And so Deacon Willard bowed himself out into the stormy street, but he had not far to plough through the snow drifts, for his home was on the same street, a few doors below.

Much more space would be required than we can spare to record the long conversation between Deacon Willard and his amiable wife that evening after his return from Mr. Townsend's; suffice it to say, it was fully decided to adopt "the better plan," in their own household, and to enlist the interest of their children in its execution.

Deacon Willard resolved that on the following day he would seek an interview with Joseph Lane and make one more effort to reclaim the fallen man, and he also planned to consult Mr. Melcher, Tom's employer, in reference to the permanent relief of his suffering family. That night, the good deacon dreamed that his pastor appeared to him as an angel of light, beckoning him on to a higher life of Christian service and Christian joy.

CHAPTER IV.

TOM LANE'S PROMOTION.

Mr. James Melcher sat alone in his counting-room. It was five o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, and Deacon Amos Willard had just left the office. Having arranged the papers on his desk, as it was his habit to do before leaving the store for the night, he wrote a few words upon a narrow strip of letter paper, and taking a bank-bill from his pocket-book, pinned it to the paper upon which he had written, and then enclosed it in an envelope, which he carefully sealed and laid upon his desk. This done, he touched a spring within his reach, which rang a bell in the counting-room. This was immediately answered by the assistant bookkeeper, who entered his office.

"Send Tom Lane to me at once," was Mr. Melcher's order.

The clerk withdrew, and, opening the counting-room door, he passed down the long ware-room.

"Where is Tom?" he enquired of the head salesman.

He is at work on the third floor. What's wanted of Tom?"

"Mr. Melcher wants him in his office immediately," the clerk replied.

The salesman went to the elevator and shouted at the top of his voice for Tom to come down right away. In less than a minute Tom appeared, descending on the elevator. He was clad in a pair of buff-colored nankeen overalls, which were strapped upon his shoulders, over a short jacket. He wore a blue, military cap, with straight visor, which was tipped back upon his head, and beneath which his brown curls protruded like a young girl's bangs.

"What's wanted, Mr. Clark?" he asked of the head-salesman, as he jumped from the elevator.

"Mr. Melcher is waiting for you in his office," was the reply. "Hurry up, Tom."

The next minute Tom stood, cap in hand, before his employer's desk, his face and hands begrimed with dust and dirt.

"Close the door and sit down, Tom. I want a few words with you before I leave the office," said Mr. Melcher.

The boy did as he was requested, and sat down on the edge of the chair, with an expression of sheer perplexity on his countenance.

"Tom, what have you been doing to get your face so soiled?" asked Mr. Melcher, smiling at the lad's appearance.

"Been piling up old boxes, to make room for goods," the boy replied.

"How long have you been in our employ?"

"Three months come next Monday, sir," was the answer.

"Well, Tom, do you like your work," was Mr. Melcher's next question.

The boy hesitated a moment, and then replied: "Mr. Melcher, I can't say that I like the work, but I am willing to do it."

"Too much drudgery, Tom?"

"No, sir, it is not the hard work, nor the dirty work, but er—but—"

"But, what, Tom?" asked Mr. Melcher, looking the embarrassed boy full in the face.

"Mr. Melcher," stammered the boy, blushing, but not quailing before the gaze of his employer, "I am very glad to have any situation in your store, but I am anxious to become an accountant and so fit myself for a position where I can earn more."

"You would prefer a place in the office, would you, Tom?" asked Mr. Melcher.

"Yes, sir, very much indeed, but I do not ask, nor expect it," the boy replied.

"Did you ever study book-keeping?"

"Yes, sir, during the third year in the High School. I have also devoted considerable attention to practical arithmetic and to penmanship," Tom answered, having recovered entirely from his embarrassment.

"I have observed that you write a good hand," responded his employer. "What books are those you carry back and forth from your home to the store?"

"Greek and Latin text books, sir."

"Do you find time to study in the store," asked Mr. Melcher, pleasantly.

"Only at noon-time, sir. I eat my dinner in the store, and get a half hour or so, every day," was Tom's answer.

"Do you study at home?"

"Yes, evenings."

"What are you aiming at, Tom?"

"To keep up with my class in the High School," Tom replied.

"Tom, if you had your choice which would you rather do, have the situation of assistant book-keeper in our counting-room, or return to the High School, and complete your course?" his employer asked, looking earnestly into the lad's countenance.

"Mr. Melcher, if I were able to do it, I should choose the High School, but that is impossible. My mother needs my help, and so I should choose the situation in your office," was Tom's reply.

"Well, Tom, I have called you in here to offer you the place of assistant book-keeper. Mr. Chute is not well, and desires to take the road, hoping to improve his health by

being more in the open air. The place will be vacant in a few weeks. Meanwhile, you may come into the office immediately, and pick up all the knowledge you can of the work, while Mr. Chute is here. I have a boy who will take your place in the ware-house to-morrow morning. With the beginning of the New Year, your pay will be doubled, and when you can discharge the duties of the assistant book-keeper, you will draw a salary of six hundred dollars a year."

No words can describe the astonishment of Tom at this unexpected promotion. The boy was fairly dumb with amazement, and he struggled to give expression to his gratitude. Words would not come to his lips, but tears came to his eyes.

Mr. Melcher, seeing his emotion, laid his hand upon the lad's knee, and said:

"Tom, no thanks are necessary. You are every way worthy of promotion. In the short time you have been with us, you have established for yourself a good reputation for obedience, industry, and thoroughness in your work. These are prime qualities of success in any pursuit, and I should not have advanced you, had you not possessed them.

"Here, Tom," continued Mr. Melcher, "take this as a Christmas present, not from the firm, but from me, as a token of my appreciation of your fidelity," and so saying, he gave to the bewildered boy the sealed envelope he had taken from his desk. "Good night."

As Tom passed through the counting room, exposed to the eyes of two clerks, he turned his face aside, and pulled his cap down over his eyes to hide the joyful tears which were brimming into his eyes, giving to the clerks the impression that he had received a scolding from Mr. Melcher.

"What's Tom been up to?" asked the book-keeper of his companion.

"More'n I know," replied Mr. Chute, but it looks to me as if he had got his walking ticket."

"Don't you believe it," said the book-keeper. Mr. Melcher would as soon dismiss you as he would Tom. But something is the matter, surely."

"Possibly Mr. Melcher has been asking Tom about his father's habits. I saw Lane yesterday so intoxicated he could scarcely walk," Mr. Chute replied.

"I don't think Mr. Melcher would speak of that matter to Tom. It would cut the boy all up. But perhaps he has been questioning him about his mother. From all I can learn, matters are dismal enough in Tom's home."

"By the way, Mr. Chute, who is to take your place in the office next month?"

Mr. Melcher told me his morning that he had someone in view," the assistant book-keeper replied.

"Perhaps it is Tom," observed the book-keeper.

"That's not at all likely," was Mr. Chute's reply.

"We shall see," was the book-keeper's quiet answer.

Tom's heart was full, too full, to speak to anyone. He went directly to the upper story to finish his task, and there he could shed his tears unseen. It was such astounding good news, such tremendous luck; it was so entirely unlooked for. How the boy longed to fly home to tell his mother and Susie! The sealed envelope he had placed in his pocket he resolved not to open until he had left the store. This resolution was strengthened by the sound of the ascending elevator. One of the clerks was going to the loft above.

Tom was crying for very happiness. The tears would flow in spite of him. At length, after vigorous application, first of his soiled coat sleeve, then of his handkerchief, he succeeded in getting his eyes dry, but they were very red. Tom thought they must be, and feared they would tell of

his weakness, so he pulled out a little round pocket mirror, and took a look at his face, at the sight of which he laughed outright. It was such a comical face; the tears had left long streaks down his dusty cheeks. But Tom rubbed them with his handkerchief until they were as red as his eyes, and then went below to make preparations to go home.

CHAPTER V.

TOM'S TEMPTATION.

The last duties of the day accomplished, his nankeens removed, his face and hands washed, his brown curls combed back into place, where they stubbornly refused to stay, Tom left the store, observing as he passed out, that Mr. Melcher, with hat and gloves on, stood earnestly talking with the book-keeper in the counting-room.

When Tom was on the street with his face turned homeward, he drew from his pocket the sealed envelope which Mr. Melcher had given him, and which he was longing to examine. Glancing hastily about him, and supposing that he was unobserved, he stopped under a gaslight and opened the envelope, and drew forth a bank bill with an X on it.

"Je-ru-sa-lem!" exclaimed the boy, with long drawn emphasis, as he held the bill up to the light. "Ten dollars!" and just then catching sight of the paper pinned to the note, he read the words written thereon slowly, like a six-year-old child, "For—Christmas—comforts—in—your—home." The amazed boy stood still for a full minute, rooted to the spot, reading the words over and over, and finally the truth broke slowly in upon his mind that Mr. Melcher had given him that money to spend for Christmas just as he might please. When this idea was fully conceived, it brought up before his mind bright visions of Christmas gladness and festivity in his poor home. Then, there was stirred in his glad heart a great feeling of gratitude, and utterly unable to resist the tide of his emotions, Tom burst into tears, and laughter; the tears came first, and then the laughter, and after a brief struggle between the two for the mastery, the laughter got

the victory and the happy lad bounded off towards his home, which was nearly two miles distant.

Tom's nearest way home lay along Lincoln Street, the most attractive throughfare of the city, and lined with retail stores of every description. Turning from Broad Street into Lincoln, Tom was brought to a standstill before a large and well furnished provision store. In the window was hanging a most tempting row of dressed poultry,—turkeys of all sizes, and chickens and geese of all ages.

"A turkey like that, now," mused Tom, as he fixed his eyes on a fair ten pounder, "would be a Christmas comfort in my home, and no mistake. I wonder if Mr. Melcher didn't mean a turkey among other things," the boy almost uttered aloud; "what would mother say if I should march in and lay that bird on the table tonight? Wouldn't she be astonished? Oh, I know what she would say, soliloquized Tom; she would say, 'Tom, we must do without turkey so long as we have no money with which to buy shoes and clothes.' Guess I had better talk it over with mother first; but I am awfully tempted," the boy said aloud. "Wish I could make it seem right to do it. 'Tom Lane, you just stop looking at those turkeys and start for home'." Thus apostrophizing himself, Tom hurried up the street.

But he hadn't proceeded a hundred yards before he was again brought to a full stop. This time it was before the brilliant window of Chase's big toy shop, which was all ablaze with elegant dolls, dressed in every variety of style. It was a charming spectacle.

"There is nothing in the world," thought Tom, "that Susie wants so much as a doll. There is one marked one dollar. That is a handsome doll for that price. Wouldn't it make Susie dance on Christmas morning to find a doll on her pillow? Wouldn't that be an awful comfort to Susie? What's to hinder my going right in and buying that doll, I

should like to know?" and the boy actually made a start for the door. But suddenly he checked himself, and slowly shook his head. "No, it won't do; I see plainly it won't do," he thought. "It won't do to spend money for turkey or dolls either while Mr. Townsend is sending up wood and coal, and Deacon Willard is paying our rent. Susie must go without a doll this Christmas, unless the good Lord sends her one. 'Tom Lane, you had better go straight home, for there is too much temptation for you on the street to stand up under'." With these reflections Tom started off again, walking rapidly, and whistling his favorite tune.

It happened that just after Tom had started for home, Mr. Melcher left his store, and turned towards his home on Main Street, in the direction opposite to that which Tom had taken. The merchant had taken but a few steps, however, when he recollected that he had been charged with a shopping errand by Mrs. Melcher. This caused him to wheel suddenly about, and walk rapidly towards Lincoln Street. He was now brought face to face with the sharp east wind which was beginning to rise. Turning up the high collar of his long ulster, he chanced to look beyond him and saw Tom standing under the gas light, a few doors above his own store, just in the act of opening the envelope he had an hour before given him.

Mr. Melcher involuntary stepped aside into a doorway to observe the boy. He noticed Tom's excitement, heard the long drawn exclamation—"Je-ru-sa-lem" which fell from his lips, saw him hold up the bank bill, and read the label on it, even heard him pronouncing slowly the words written thereon. Then he noticed him brush away his tears of joy and heard his laughter,—and such a genuine, happy laugh it was. What pleasant echoes it made in Mr. Melcher's soul! Tom's laugh came back again on the east wind, as he bounded off, and Mr. Melcher said aloud, when

he emerged from his hiding place, "It was worth ten dollars just to hear that boy laugh." Then Mr. Melcher caught the contagion of Tom's laughter, and he chuckled merrily to himself as he hurried up the street. "How I should like to shadow that boy to-night!" he thought.

Mr. Melcher had not the slightest intention of doing this, but what should he see as he turned from Broad into Lincoln Street, but Tom standing there before the provision store.

Now Mr. Melcher had his reasons for not wishing to be seen by Tom, so he quickly crossed the street and while Tom was standing gazing into the window upon the turkeys hanging there, he stepped into a doorway directly opposite. He could not hear the boy's soliloquy, but he had not the least difficulty in interpreting his thoughts. He knew Tom was thinking about buying a Christmas turkey. He hoped that he would do so. He would wait and see him carry it away. He was no little disappointed when he saw Tom hesitate, shake his head, and then hasten away. "What ails the boy? Why, in the name of Cæsar, didn't he go in and buy that big turkey that he had his eye on?" Mr. Melcher was almost on the point of shouting after Tom, when he remembered that it was only Wednesday night, and that Christmas would not be until Saturday. "There is time enough, after all," he thought, so he walked up the street.

Mr. Melcher was just on the point of entering a dry goods store, when he again caught sight of Tom as he stood gazing into the toy-shop window. "Wonder what the boy is thinking about now?" he said to himself. Stepping into the store, he stood at the door watching Tom. It was perfectly clear to Mr. Melcher that this time the boy had a doll in his head, and for whom could it be but his little sister Susie, of whom Deacon Willard had spoken? "I guess the doll will be too much for him," thought Mr. Melcher as he

saw Tom make a start for the door of the toy store. His hand was on the door-latch, but to Mr. Melcher's disappointment he saw Tom draw back, shake his head and move rapidly away. After making a purchase in the dry goods store, Mr. Melcher crossed the street and entered the toy shop. He bought the handsomest doll in the window, and left orders to have it marked "Susie" and sent to the house of Joseph Lane, Mechanic Street, Friday evening. He made the shopman promise to see that his order was faithfully carried out. He then passed down the street and entered the provision store, selecting the very ten-pounder that had fascinated Tom's eye, he ordered it to be sent to Joseph Lane, Mechanic Street. Paying the bill, he said to the provision dealer, "Bear in mind that no questions are to be answered as to where this turkey came from. Be sure and send it on Friday evening."

"All right, Mr. Melcher," said the merchant.

CHAPTER VI.

TOM AT HOME.

While Tom is rapidly drawing towards his home let us look in upon the family group.

The house which Joseph Lane's family occupied was far from inviting in its external appearance. It wore the visible marks of neglect, and suggested the thought of poverty within. But like many abodes of the unfortunate whose reduced means has necessitated a change of residence, its internal arrangements and adornments showed that its inmates had seen better days.

The furniture, pictures, books, and mantel ornaments of its small parlor, all silently bore witness to the unhappy change which had come over the family life.

The cosy kitchen, in which the family were sitting around the only fire in the house, was a picture of neatness and order. Braided rugs covered the painted floor, and blossoming house plants adorned the south window, where they rejoiced daily in God's pure sunlight which floods the homes of poor and rich alike.

The tin tea-kettle steaming on the stove had been polished that very day. Susie, Tom's little sister, was sitting close to the cooking stove, her feet on its hearth, and her big blue eyes, bluer and brighter, if possible, than her brother's, were fixed upon the mantel clock which was ticking as fast as a good clock should, and whose cheerful face indicated that it was just quarter past six. Susie's head, over which her brown curls fell in rich profusion, was leaning against her low-backed rocking chair as she exclaimed:

"Mamma, isn't it most time for Tom to come?"

"No, it will be twenty minutes before Tom will reach

home. It is hard walking to-night through the drifting snow, and against the strong east wind," her mother replied.

"O! you slow-going clock! Why don't you hurry up? Mamma, I wish that lazy minute-hand would skip along faster and get up to the figure ten," exclaimed the impatient little girl.

"You must not wish time away, Susie; it flies fast enough."

"I wish Tom would come. It makes the day so long to have Tom and papa away all the time," was Susie's response.

"It has indeed been a long, weary day," her mother replied. "If you want to make the time pass quickly, get a book and read. You know, 'A watched pot never boils,' and it is just as true that a watched clock never hurries," her mother said as she closed her eyes, and gently rocked the baby's cradle.

"Mamma, do you think papa will come home to supper to-night? I'm so hungry."

Her mother did not reply, but endeavored to suppress a half escaped sigh.

"Mamma, how kind it was of Mr. Townsend to send us such nice things. I do just love him. Isn't Deacon Willard a beautiful man? I don't know which one I love best. Which do you, mamma?"

"I am sure I cannot tell you," her mother replied with a smile. "They are both God's dear servants, and He has put it into their hearts to be very kind to us."

"I shall pray God to bless them as long as I live," said Susie with animation.

"That's right, Susie! God will hear your prayers. Don't forget to remember your poor father, too."

"Mamma, I have been praying that God would help papa to find work. If he had work all the time, I think he would be good, mamma, don't you?"

"Yes, Susie, your father is struggling hard to do right, and if he could get work to do it would help him greatly to be brave and strong."

Susie glanced at her mother's sad face as she sat with closed eyes, then taking a book from the table she began to read.

While Susie was reading, Mrs. Lane was engaged in silent prayer. None but God knew her sad thoughts. Her husband had gone out from his home that morning utterly disheartened, to seek for employment. She knew not in what condition he would return. She knew that he was too weak to resist temptation, and she inwardly dreaded his return.

Yet she was not hopeless. Unconsciously her little daughter had ministered some comfort to her heart. Surely God would regard the prayers of her innocent child, even if her own were unavailing. Then, out of her own soul ascended a silent appeal for strength to bear, and patience to wait. The appeal was not in vain. Divine words of hope passed through her mind. "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me upon a rock." Mrs. Lane was comforted.

An exclamation by Susie, accompanied by the clapping of her hands, roused her from her reverie.

"That's Tom's whistle, mamma. Don't you hear the old tune he always whistles when he is happy."

And sure enough, Tom was marching into the door-yard, keeping brisk step to "Tramp, tramp, tramp the boys are marching," which he was whistling with surprising vigor.

One boy was marching, certainly. In he came, tramping right into the kitchen, affecting to take no notice whatever of Susie who had sprung to meet him, and was trying to seize his hand.

"I am very glad to hear your whistle to-night, Tom," his mother said, when the boy ceased, "though it used to half craze me."

"I had to whistle or shout, mother. I've kept that tune going all the way from Lincoln Street," the boy replied.

"What can have happened to put you in such good spirits, Tom?"

"Happened! why everything that's jolly!" exclaimed the boy. "First, I'm appreciated; second, I'm promoted; third, wages doubled; fourth, had a wind-fall in the shape of a ten spot. Tell you what, Susie, Morton & Melcher is the firm to work for. One doesn't find a man like Mr. Melcher every day. Just look at that," and the happy lad waved his ten-dollar note so rapidly before Susie's eyes, and so very close to those wondering orbs, that she couldn't do anything but wink, and so was unable to look at the note at all. "Here's your Christmas money,—'For Christmas comforts'," shouted Tom, while Mrs. Lane began to think the boy was crazy.

"Christmas money! what can you mean, Tom? I hope you don't think for a moment that we can spend your wages for Christmas gifts," said his mother.

"Who's talking about wages, mother," retorted Tom? "Here's your wages," and he tossed three silver dollars into his mother's lap. "That's the scrub money, but this is for Christmas comforts. Read the label, mother; that tells the story," and Tom threw the ten-dollar bill into his mother's lap beside his wages, and then seizing Susie, he waltzed her about the room until she was well-nigh breathless, after which, seating himself, and taking a long inhalation, he be-

gan to tell the story of his good fortune. All the while Susie was a sight to behold, her eyes expanding, her lips parted, and her countenance expressive of delighted amazement.

Tom made the most of his story, lengthening it by interjected observations highly eulogistic of Mr. Melcher, and taking great satisfaction, as he went along, in watching the faces of his mother and sister.

Silent, glad, and deeply thankful was Mrs. Lane, as she listened. The clouds that had hung so dark and so long over her home had broken, and through the rift she caught a glimpse of clear blue sky. "At even tide it shall be light," she thought. Surely the day of hope was beginning to dawn.

"Susie," she said, "it is past seven o'clock. Put on the tea, and I will take the biscuit from the oven. We will wait no longer for your father."

At the table the story of Deacon Willard's visit was rehearsed to Tom, and he was informed that all arrears in rent had been paid, with one month in advance; that a barrel of flour had been placed in the pantry, and coal and wood put in the cellar, all through Deacon Willard's agency.

Tom listened in his turn, but with a sobered face. "Mother," he said, "Deacon Willard is very kind to us; so has been Mr. Townsend, but it comes hard to have to receive so much in the way of charity. I shall make it all right with them some time."

"My dear boy, I honor your feeling. It is our duty to receive thankfully what the Lord has provided for us in our great need. I have never before realized how blessed it is to be numbered among his people. With this gift from Mr. Melcher and your increased wages, we shall need no more help this winter, even if your father fails to obtain work, as I fear he will."

"Hasn't father been home to-day?" asked Tom.

"We have not seen him since morning," his mother replied.

"I was strongly tempted to buy a turkey for Christmas on my way home to-night, mother," said Tom, as if anxious to change the subject.

"I am very glad that you did not," his mother replied.

"I thought you wouldn't approve of my doing it."

"I saw a beautiful doll which I wanted to purchase for you, Susie. I was awfully tempted to buy it, though."

"You dear good Tom," cried Susie, as she jumped from her chair and threw her arms about Tom's neck. "Tell me all about the doll. Was it dressed?"

"Elegantly," replied her brother, with emphasis on the first syllable.

"What was the dress made of?" asked the little girl, still hugging him.

"Oh, of silk or satin, or some such rich, glossy stuff."

"What was the color of her eyes?"

"What difference does it make to you, Susie, what sort of eyes it had, as long as it isn't yours?"

"Why, Tom, I want to think that you were going to buy me a doll with black eyes, because I like black eyes best."

"I'll remember that, Susie, and some day I'll buy you a black doll, with big eyes—no, I mean a big doll, with black eyes."

"Tom was very kind, Susie, to wish to buy a doll for you, and very wise not to do it. You need a new hat, and new shoes, and some rubbers, too, so that you can go to Sunday-school. Perhaps I can get them for you to-morrow," her mother said.

"I shall be very glad to go to Sunday-school again," said Susie, joyfully.

"We shall have a merry Christmas, anyhow, if only father—" Tom did not finish the sentence, and the old shadow passed over his face.

Just then a noise was heard at the door, and presently Mr. Lane walked feebly into the room and sank helplessly into his easy chair. His wife saw at a glance that he had been drinking.

"Wife," said Mr. Lane, "I am utterly broken down. I have yielded to temptation again, but it is the last time. I have had a terrible day. Met Harry Gardner, my old army chum, and he asked me to drink with him. Harry didn't know how weak I am. Harry is in the lock-up, and I have been helped home by Tom's classmates, Robert Townsend and William Willard. Fine fellows, they are."

An expression of pain, the pang of mortification, passed over Tom's face, but he was silent.

"Tom, forgive me; it is the last time. Wife, believe me, it shall never be again. I will never drink another glass of liquor; I'll die first, so help me God! Tom, dear Tom, remember what I say." Tom was in tears. Susie said nothing, but her action was more touching than words. She moved her low chair by her poor father's side, and took his cold, trembling hand in hers.

"My dear husband," said his wife, "God will help you; we will all help you," and she put her hand softly upon his head, but she could not keep back the tears; they flowed freely—tears of love and pity, tears of joy and hope.

"Father,"said Tom, recovering himself, "I believe you, and I'll help you. Come, let us pull off your wet boots, and remove your overcoat, and then you eat some supper."

O blessed love! O sweet sympathy! Mr. Lane was suffering in mind and body, and as his family ministered to him

in pity and kindness, he felt himself utterly unworthy of their love. After partaking of some slight refreshments, they put the unhappy man to bed, and as he laid his head upon his pillow, he said, "God bless Deacon Willard!"

So ended Joseph Lane's last day of intemperance.

CHAPTER VII.

TOM LANE'S CHRISTMAS.

The night before Christmas came. At eight o'clock, the members of the Lane family were all at home, sitting around their kitchen fire. A most unexpected and surprising change had taken place in the aspect of their family life. Had you looked in upon them, at that hour, you would have seen Mr. Lane, sitting pale and thoughtful, before the stove in his easy chair. We cannot say that he was altogether cheerful, but we can say he was thankful. He looked upon himself as a rescued man, and upon Captain Amos Willard as God's instrument in his salvation.

His little daughter sat near him, absorbed in a story she was just finishing. The baby was sleeping, and Mrs. Lane sat by its cradle sewing, with her mind full of happy and hopeful thoughts of the future. As for Tom, he sat with both elbows on the table, near the lamp, wrestling with a passage in Xenophon.

Suddenly the door bell rang loudly. Tom went to the door, and received from the city parcel delivery two packages, one very heavy, and the other very light. The heavy one was done up securely in coarse brown paper; the other was a box neatly wrapped in fine white paper. Both were addressed to Mr. Joseph Lane. At his father's request, Tom proceeded to examine the contents of the packages, beginning with the lighter one. No sooner had he lifted the cover of the paper box than he was brought face to face with a beautiful wax doll, richly robed in garnet colored satin, and possessing hair and eyes of the deepest black. The boy gave a sudden start of surprise, and when he read

the words pinned on the doll's dress "For Susie," he clapped the cover on, and gave the box to his sister, saying:

"Here, sis, take your property. It isn't for me, after all. I'm awfully sorry."

Susie took the box, and the family eyes were all fastened upon her, except the baby's, as she lifted the cover. It was the greatest surprise of Susie's life, and perhaps it was the moment of her most thrilling joy. Never had she seen such a magnificent doll. Never had she hoped to own such an one. And this was hers. Wonder filled the child's eyes, causing them to expand and sparkle. Tom was so glad to see his sister's delight. Just for a moment, Susie was speechless. Then she exclaimed, in the fullness of her satisfaction and gratitude, "O Tom, can you guess who sent it to me?"

"Oh, yes, Susie, easy enough. I can guess a hundred thousand times, but it is no use guessing. Of course Santa Claus sent it. You ought to have known that. The old fellow must have been hovering over my head, when I stood before Chase's toy store last Wednesday evening, for I tell you the truth, Susie, that is the very same doll I picked out for you, or it's her twin sister."

"Mama," said Susie, laying the doll in her mother's lap, "I don't think Santa Claus sent it. Perhaps the Lord gave it to me."

"Yes, Susie, I truly believe He did."

"Mama, dear, I am so happy and so thankful!" said the dear child, and she went to show the doll to her father.

Meanwhile, Tom was investigating the larger package. It proved to be just what he thought it was, a Christmas turkey.

Tom held up the turkey before his father's eyes, and exclaimed, "Father, that is the identical turkey I longed to buy last Wednesday evening! A life size portrait of that

bird has been hanging in my brain ever since. I do believe the good Lord intended that turkey for the Lane family. I wonder whom he raised up to send it to us, though. Isn't it a beauty, father?"

"I never saw a better dressed turkey in my life!" his father answered.

While Tom was speculating about the origin of the turkey, the door bell pealed forth again louder, if possible, than before. Tom dropped the turkey and hastened to the door. A great noise followed as Tom and the expressman tugged a heavy box into the kitchen. This, too, was marked "Joseph Lane, 54 Mechanic Street."

In less than two minutes Tom had the cover off, and the first thing that met his eyes was a Christmas card, on the back of which was written, "A Christmas Offering for the Family of Joseph Lane. Given in Memory of our Lord's birth."

The contents of the box were now explored, Tom acting in the double capacity of inspector and exhibitor. It was a wonderful box, both in the quantity and quality of its treasures. First, there came forth a heavy overcoat, with "For Tom," pinned on its sleeve. Next, a bundle, marked "For Susie," which she unrolled, and found to contain a pair of shoes, encased in rubbers, and a tam o'shanter cap, such as all the girls were wearing that season. A woolen shawl was now brought forth, and a dress pattern, of dark material, for Mrs. Lane. Then Tom fished out a pair of arctic overshoes, and a pair of warm gloves for Mr. Lane, which were the two things he most needed in the line of wearing apparel. A heavy package was now displayed, which proved to be a pair of polished steel skates for himself, such as the boy had long wished for. Tom measured them on his foot, and observed, "Whoever packed this box

knew something about the wants of the Lane family, that much is certain."

"So I have been thinking," his mother remarked.

But Tom had not ended his investigations, and now was brought to sight a small bundle, which proved to contain several articles of infant wearing apparel, all wrapped around a baby's rubber rattle, which was surmounted by tingling little silver bells, the music of which Susie began at once to test. This woke up the baby, who immediately began to cry, as even good babies will, when suddenly awakened. Then Susie placed the child's first Christmas gift in his chubby fist, which had the effect to change his crying into crowing, thus demonstrating the domestic utility of the infant's toy. All the family enjoyed the baby's delight, and Susie declared that it was the handsomest rattle she had ever seen. Doubtless the baby would have said the same thing if he could have spoken for himself.

"Tom," cried Susie, there is something more in the box."

"Yes, I know it," and so saying, Tom suddenly, but gently tipped Susie over into the box. "There is a great deal more in the box than came in it," he added, and then as suddenly and as gently he lifted her out again.

"Oh, Tom, how strong you are!" said Susie, gayly. "What is in the box, in the bottom of the box, I wonder?" she asked.

"That box, in the bottom of the box, Miss Curiosity, is a box full of candy and nuts," cried Tom, as he opened it. "Look Susie, chocolate creams and caramels, and bon-bons, and all sorts of nuts." Susie was in ecstacy, as Tom allowed her to first take her choice from the tempting contents.

The reader will not be greatly surprised to be informed that this delightful box of Christmas gifts had been packed that morning in the house of Rev. Robert Townsend, and that it was mainly filled with the articles which had been

purchased by the twenty-five dollars raised around that gentleman's tea table on the previous Saturday evening. Tom's overcoat was, however, the gift of Deacon Willard, and his skates were the joint gift of Robert Townsend and William Willard.

Great as was the happiness this Christmas box brought to the family of Mr. Lane, there was a deeper and more satisfying joy in the hearts of the clergyman's family when they each assisted in preparing and packing its contents. It is always "more blessed to give than to receive," when the giving is in the spirit of true Christian love.

The members of the Lane family were quite satisfied that they were indebted to the thoughtful kindness of Mr. Townsend and his household for their Christmas gifts, but they never knew how largely little Julia Townsend had contributed to their enjoyment.

The next day was Christmas. With one more glance into Mr. Lane's home we will conclude our story.

The cheerful kitchen clock is striking nine, and Mrs. Lane is just placing in the oven a large turkey, all stuffed and basted. Tom stands by, watching the turkey's disappearance, with evident interest. The oven door closed, he resumes his inspection of his new skates, inwardly calculating the probability of his outstripping Rob and Will on the river skating park that afternoon.

Susie is fondling her beautiful doll, trying to think of a name pretty enough to give to it, and indignantly resenting Tom's brotherly suggestion to christen it Peggy, and done with it.

The baby is propped up with pillows in his cradle, shaking his rattle over his head, and bumping it into his eyes, with various expressions of delight, we know not how to record.

While all this is going on, Mr. Lane sits musing in his chair. His face is calm and thoughtful, and down deep in his heart is fervent gratitude for the goodness of his God, and the sympathy and kindness of those whose Christian love has borne such rich and abundant fruits in his household.

Rev. Mr. Townsend's better plan had succeeded far beyond his hopes. It bore spiritual fruits which were unlooked for. Joseph Lane was restored to manhood. He was received back to his old position, as overseer in the Mendon Mills. His family moved back, early in the spring, to their former residence on Cedar Street, and when Tom Lane, William Willard, and Robert Townsend were received into the church, Joseph Lane stood with them and publicly consecrated himself to Christ.

BEARING ANOTHER'S BURDEN

A CHRISTMAS STORY

BEARING ANOTHER'S BURDEN.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

I.

Horace Bradford was out upon the public street for his afternoon walk, his daily constitutional, as he termed it. Usually he had a companion, for he was both a great pedestrian and a great conversationalist. Many an influential citizen coveted the pleasure of a walk and a talk with the social and intelligent treasurer of the Franklin Savings Bank of the city.

On this December afternoon, Mr. Bradford was walking alone. The main avenue of the city was thronged with people, and he turned into Marine Street to avoid the crowd. Pursuing his way with a brisk step, he came close upon two men carrying dinner pails, and engaged in earnest conversation.

" 'Tis an awful blow, to fall upon me, John, at this time of the year," the elder man was saying to his companion.

"That's so, Mr. Dale, it's bad for all of us, but it must be a regular stunner for you with your large family, your wife sick, and your boy, Jimmie, laid up with a broken leg."

"It's a thunderbolt out of a cloudless sky, John, wholly unexpected. I hate mortally to carry this bad news home to my family. It will knock out all our plans."

"You mean for Christmas, I suppose?"

"Yes, John, the children are all anticipating the joys of Christmas observances and festivities. I am heartsick to think of their disappointment."

"Don't get doleful, Mr. Dale. The works may start up again, soon."

"No, not until Spring time, and perhaps not then. There'll be nothing doing this Winter, and you know, John, Marine Street is lined with idle men, waiting for work."

"Abram Dale, it is hard luck for you; I hardly know how I shall stand up under it, but happily, I have no one depending upon my earnings for support."

"The fact is, John, that during my wife's long sickness, I had to pull out little by little all my savings for the past five years."

"I suppose you laid it up for a rainy day, Mr. Dale, and when the storm came you were lucky to have had it."

"That's so, John, I wasn't thinking about that, but there's the six children all planning for a merry Christmas. That's what knocks me out the most."

"Your son, Jimmie, got a tumble lately, I've heard."

"Yes, broke his leg in a football game, a bad break, too."

"That cost you something I'll bet."

"I paid Dr. Jordan fifty dollars for the job."

"Expensive, getting educated in these days," Mr. Maxwell observed. "By the way, Dr. Jordan wasn't very merciful for a Christian physician, was he?"

"My family physician, Dr. Bliss, told me that Dr. Jordan saved the boy's leg," Mr. Dale answered.

"What was his bill, may I ask?"

"He would accept of nothing for his services after the broken bone was set."

"That's more like a Christian, Mr. Dale. Dr. Jordan might have been easier with you. You can't make me believe he was doing the Lord's business, when he took fifty dollars out of your pocket for a few hours' work."

"Never mind, John, I paid it cheerfully, for he saved Jimmie from being a life-long cripple; but it took the last dollar of my bank deposit."

"Too bad! too bad! it was robbery and cruelty."

"Don't judge Dr. Jordan too severely, John, it's a solemn word our Lord uttered: 'Judge not.'"

"So is that other word of Scripture: 'Defraud not.'"

"Remember, John, it's a great blessing to have surgical skill in time of necessity."

"Yes," said John, "but if we had more sanctified skill, it would be enough sight better for poor people."

"We must have charity, John."

"That's exactly what Dr. Jordan needs."

"I am afraid I have prejudiced you against Dr. Jordan, but I tell you, John, if you ever need a skillful surgeon, Jordan's the man you'll send for post haste and you won't wait to find out what he'll charge for the job."

Both men laughed at this statement and as they drew near to the corner, where their ways parted, the young man said to his companion: "Mr. Dale, don't be down-hearted over this trouble. I'm no Christian, but if I were of your way of thinking and believing I would hug my faith tight and cheer up. It won't help matters to go home groaning."

"Thank you, John, for that sensible counsel. I will try and profit by it."

"Give my compliments to Mrs. Dale and the children and to Susan," was Mr. Maxwell's last word.

"All right, John, I will," replied Mr. Dale with a cheerful voice, and the two men parted.

II.

Mr. Bradford turned the corner quickly and walked slowly up the street toward home engaged in silent thought. So deep was his meditation that he passed a number of his acquaintances, with no salutation, and even lady friends without lifting his hat.

Reaching Central Ave., he stepped into a druggist shop, and asked for the city directory. Consulting it for a few minutes, he wrote the following memorandum in his pocket note-book:—"Abram Dale's residence, 29 Kirk st., John R. Maxwell, boards at 14 Dudley st."

Before reaching his own home, Mr. Bradford's thoughts found audible expression in the following soliloquy:—"I should very much like to help that unfortunate man out of his trouble! And that young fellow also needs looking after."

Mr. Bradford had formed a definite opinion of each of the men. His sympathies had been strongly drawn out towards Mr. Dale and his family, and he had conceived a liking for Mr. Dale's young friend. He had seen something in the appearance of Mr. Maxwell which led him to fear that to be long out of employment would be detrimental to his morals. He had observed also, that Mr. Dale's influence over Mr. Maxwell was wholesome. He suspected that Susan, Mrs. Dale's housemaid, was an attraction to Mr. Dale's home for the young man, and this seemed to Mr. Bradford a fortunate circumstance. Before Mr. Bradford reached his home, a definite purpose was formed in his mind, and one worthy of his Christian spirit and benevolence.

About the same time Mr. Dale entered his home, resolved to carry within no shadow of gloom. His wife rose from

the lounge to greet him, and he received a happy salutation from Jimmie, who with bandaged leg resting on an ottoman was seated near his mother. The youngest of the family, a three-year-old boy, ran to his father's arms and was tossed three times almost to the ceiling.

The four daughters of the household, aged respectively, ten, thirteen, fifteen and eighteen, had not returned from down town, whither, after school, they had gone to inspect the Christmas display in the store windows.

They all came rushing in while Mr. Dale was washing for supper, and began a perfect babble of rattling talk about the beautiful things they had seen. Jimmie looked at them silently, for a few minutes, and then said:

"If you noisy girls would tone down your voices, and talk one at a time you wouldn't make poor mother so nervous, and we should have some idea of what you are talking about."

Upon this, his oldest sister, Julia, stepped up to Jimmie's chair, and with a great show of force, gently boxed his ears.

"Girls haven't got much sense anyway," Jimmie added.

"Girls have got sense enough not to tumble down and break their bones, you saucy boy."

"Wait until your Girls' Foot Ball Club gets down to business, and see what will happen," was his retort.

Now the jingle of the supper bell called them all to the tea-table. Julia took her mother's place, presiding with graceful efficiency, while the tidy, fair-faced Susan stood by her to render all needed assistance. Mrs. Dale, too, sat at the table, and her husband observed that she was making a supreme effort to encourage him by her first presence at the tea-table since her sickness, and Jimmie contrived to sit near his mother. It is at the tea-table the family spirit reveals itself. It was for the Dale family the most cheerful hour of the household day. Mr. Dale let the conversation flow on

in its usual freedom and gladness, and gave no sign of the trouble that burdened his soul.

But later that evening when they were all together, Mr. Dale said:

"You are all expecting a merry Christmas; now my sons and daughters, couldn't you have a happy time on Christmas Day without the usual Christmas expenditures and observances?"

"Why! Papa! What a useless question, of course that would be quite impossible. It would be a very sad Christmas."

"Julia, I expected you would say just that, and, I suppose all you children would say the same, but does the real joy of Christmas depend upon the exchange of gifts or the custom of family festivity?"

"Why, no, Papa, if we were too poor to celebrate Christmas Day, we could get along without suffering, if we had no presents or feasts, but it would be dismal enough. Why do you wish us to discuss this unpleasant matter, Papa?"

"Suppose misfortune should suddenly come to us, that your father's occupation should be taken from him, and he should have no money to spare for Christmas expenditures, what then?"

"My dear Papa, we would make the best of it and be as content and happy as possible."

"Now, my sweet Julia, you speak like the good, Christian daughter you are, and you have comforted me greatly. Always Christmas has been a joyous family festivity with us, ever since you were little children. We can never forget those past happy occasions, and I trust we shall have many more such, but now misfortune has suddenly come to this household. At the end of this week the Iron Works will be closed for all Winter, if not longer. Perhaps for all Winter your father will be without work and without income. This

misfortune has come upon nigh two hundred workmen, and scores of families are under this cloud of heavy trouble. Now, under this calamity, can we spend a happy Christmas together without the usual festivities?"

"Yes, indeed! We can and we will," Mrs. Dale replied, with cheerful voice, "nor will we give way to hopelessness and thus increase our misfortune."

"My precious wife, I had no fear of your desponding. You remind me of John Maxwell's counsel to me during our walk home, while I was lamenting this unexpected trouble. I verily believe the Lord put a message in John's lips for me; says John, 'Mr. Dale, don't be down-hearted over this trouble. I'm no Christian, but if I were of your way of thinking and believing, I would just hug my faith tight and cheer up. It won't help matters any to go home groaning.' I thanked John for his helpful counsel, and resolved as the old hymn has it, to 'Put a cheerful courage on.' But wife, I am grieved at heart for the children."

"Don't be sad for me, Papa," exclaimed Julia, "I'm old enough to earn something, and I'll leave school and find a situation, and help you a little."

"So will I," cried Edith, "I know girls of my age who are working."

"I guess if anybody has to leave school and go to work it will be Jimmie Dale. Wish I had two strong legs instead of one. I would start right in," said the family cripple, with a playful earnestness in his voice.

"Children, I hope it will not be needful for any of you to leave school, but we may have to dispense with the service of Susan, and you two oldest girls do more to help your mother in the house," said their father.

"I think we shall soon have to give up Susan, anyway. I believe John Maxwell means to have her as the mistress of his home before long," remarked Julia.

"The sooner John Maxwell has her in his home the better it will be for him, and Susan will get a skillful mechanic and an industrious young man for a husband, who may, if he will, make good success in life."

Abram Dale slept soundly that night. Had not his Christian faith sustained him, he might have been sore troubled, and have found an uneasy pillow, and have tossed about upon his bed all night long.

III.

Soon after Mr. Bradford entered the Franklin Savings Bank on the following morning, he asked the bookkeeper to see if the name of Abram Dale was on the books, and if he had surrendered his account book.

The clerk soon returned with Abram Dale's bank book in his hand, and Mr. Bradford examined the book with unusual care.

"Is anything wrong with Mr. Dale's account," asked the bookkeeper?

"It's all right, sir," replied Mr. Bradford, but to himself he muttered, "It's all wrong." And this was the beginning of a thoughtful soliloquy, which shall be epitomized for the readers of this story.

In six months' time this laboring man has drawn out all his savings for the past five years. Now he is without employment, has a sick wife and a crippled son, and five other children, and must of necessity keep a hired girl.

How is he to get through the Winter without suffering? He must have help! Here is an opportunity for some Christian man to do good work for his Master. Who shall do this work? Who, but the man who has secretly discovered his trouble? Who, but the man who sees the opportunity and pities his misfortune? Is not this the Lord's call to Horace Bradford? These reflections ended in a silent appeal to God for divine guidance: Lord, show me how to help this unfortunate Christian brother.

They were not mere words—they were thoughts expressed in the silent language of self-reflection. Blessed the man who says right things to himself,—who when duty

is seen and felt, can appeal at once to the Lord for wisdom and grace to do it!

We have no space to record the process of Mr. Bradford's reasoning and plans, by which he wrought out the divine wisdom, but let subsequent events reveal the working of this good man's mind.

During the business hours of that day the bank treasurer was busy at his desk, but during those hours a process of thought was evolving in his mind, which had nothing to do with the business of the bank.

It may not be possible for a man to give his whole mind to two subjects at the same moment, but it is possible for the human mind to pass back and forth, from one thing to another within a minute's time without, in either case, a loss of continuity of thought. A Christian can "pray without ceasing", while he is working without ceasing. He can keep in mind his Lord's work, while he is faithfully devoting his mind to his business concerns. Prayer may be unceasing as a habit of man—a state of soul, may be continuous, unbroken communion with God. Mr. Bradford's mind and heart were in a prayerful state during that busy day at his bank desk, and the deepest subject of his thoughts was not the business of the bank, but his Heavenly Father's business.

The bank closed at four o'clock and Mr. Bradford was again out on the city streets. He walked rapidly to the Eagle Iron Works for an interview with Mr. Henderson, its superintendent, who was his intimate friend.

During that interview Mr. Bradford learned that the Corporation of Iron Works were in hard sledding and that its best business policy demanded the closure of the works for the Winter; that Abram Dale was an old employee of the company, the foreman of its foundry, and a most valuable workman: that John T. Maxwell was an honest and capable

mechanic, with a growing tendency to personal habits which threatened to impair his prospects in life: that he was spending too much money at theatres, billiard parlors, and too frequent visits to liquor saloons, and that it would be unfortunate for him to be long separated from the good influence of Mr. Dale's companionship, all of which information was in close accord with Mr. Bradford's own prognostication.

Mr. Bradford next turned his steps towards No. 14 Stafford Street. There he was informed that Mr. Maxwell would probably be found at the Young Men's Billiard Rooms, on West Street. Ten minutes later he entered that resort. Scanning the inmates of the place he discovered the man he was seeking, quietly watching the players. Approaching him he said, "Mr. Maxwell, I desire to have a private interview with you. Will you walk with me a little while?" With manifest surprise, Mr. Maxwell complied with his request. Their withdrawal was followed by the curious eyes of all the young men present, for Mr. Bradford was a well-known personage to the young men of the city.

"Mr. Maxwell," said Mr. Bradford, when they were outside, "I want some information about your friend, Abram Dale."

The interview lasted for twenty minutues, and then the men separated, but John T. Maxwell did not return to the billiard rooms. Indeed he had happily made his last visit to that unprofitable place of amusement—unprofitable, I mean, for the young men who frequent it.

Just what passed between Mr. Bradford and Mr. Dale during that short interview I shall not relate, but with the beginning of the New Year Mr. Maxwell was in training for a position in the service of the electric railroad company of the city, of which Mr. Bradford was a director. Before the first month of the New Year was ended the comely form

of Mr. Maxwell became familiar to the public, as motorman, a position which required of every candidate, rigid temperance habits, and afforded very little time for theatres or billiard saloons.

As Mr. Bradford walked homeward that evening, after his interviews with Mr. Henderson and Mr. Maxwell, he was conscious of an inward self-complacency, which was commendable and enjoyable. Two problems in philanthropy had been solved that day in his own mind. How best to extend needed help to Mr. Dale and how to put Mr. Maxwell in a position most favorable for his material and moral welfare.

The practical solution of these problems was to Mr. Bradford neither a difficult nor a joyless task. Possessing the benevolent mind, the sympathetic heart, and the ready hand, he found sweet satisfaction in bearing another's burdens.

IV.

Christmas came, and in the home of Abram Dale there was the usual festivity and Christmas tree observances. All of the household were present to partake of the usual turkey dinner, fruits, nuts and flowers with the delicacies of the confectioner's art, adorned the table and enriched the sumptuous feast.

There was but one family guest who sat by the side of Susan. It was no other than genial John Maxwell, whose lively conversation, intermingled with his droll stories, added greatly to the enjoyment of the children, and the merriment of the occasion.

In the evening came the delightful ceremony of plucking the boughs of the Christmas tree, which were laden with much more than "twelve manner of fruits," John Maxwell assuming the role of Old Santa Claus.

All this unexpected festivity and enjoyment can be explained in a brief statement of fact.

A few days before Christmas, Mr. Dale received by special delivery a post office registered letter which contained a bright fifty dollar bill as a Christmas gift to himself and family, the writer subscribing himself, "Your Unknown Friend." In that brief letter the earnest desire of the anonymous writer was expressed that the money be expended, as far as needful for the usual Christmas observances in the family of Mr. Dale. This letter was more than a nine days' wonder to Mr. and Mrs. Dale, and endless were the family's speculations as to the author's personality.

Early in January Mr. Dale received a communication from the president of one of the national banks of the city,

offering him the position of night watchman in the bank, which was promptly and gladly accepted.

The reader can readily see in this the hand of Mr. Dale's unknown friend, but Mr. Dale did not see it, and his perplexity, as well as his gratitude, was increased. But Mr. Dale did recognize the hand of the Lord in it all, and both his Christian faith and spiritual joy were greatly deepened. But, even a deeper and more soul-satisfying joy, abode in the heart of that servant of God, who, by his loving kindness, simple faith, working by love, had been the secret instrumentality of lifting another man's burden, and that man a stranger in whom he recognized a Christian brother.

If the writer has accomplished his aim in this quiet household story, he has shed, at least, an illustrative light upon the Pauline Precept, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Grandly sings Tennyson:

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

BERTHA BRIGHTWOOD

THE STORY OF A CHRISTMAS GIFT

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I.

One pleasant December afternoon Miss Bertha Brightwood sat in the spacious bay window of her father's house engaged in deep thought. This bay window afforded a sweeping view from the family sitting room up and down the broad avenue upon which Dr. Brightwood's residence was situated.

In this bay window, on a small oaken table, was a white chrysanthemum in full bloom, whose luxurious blossoms bowed gracefully towards the city street, as if inviting all passers by to behold their beauty.

Many a careworn face brightened a little as its upturned eyes caught sight of Bertha's favorite flower, and brightened still more if its fair possessor was keeping it company in the bay window. Of personal charms Bertha had her full share, of which, however, she seemed ever to be unconscious. She had placed her chrysanthemum in the bay window, not merely to display its beauty, but to bestow it upon others. This reveals one of the beautiful traits of her character. Never could she get full satisfaction out of any personal pleasure, unless some one shared it with her.

From infancy this broad, bay window had been her daily resort. Times without number, before she could walk, had she drawn herself up to its low casement by the strength of her little arms, to gaze with delight upon the pleasant street. The passing people, the playful children, the rumbling street

cars, the wonderful horses, the dogs of all varieties and sizes, and the sportive kittens, all had ministered to the happiness of her babyhood.

In this same bay window, as a motherly little girl, she had taken care of her waxen children, who daily needed to be washed, fed and fondled, and rocked to sleep in their cradles. And, when they were ill, she had only to cross the hall and order in her family physician from her father's office. Many a time had Dr. Brightwood felt of the pulses and prescribed remedies for Bertha's sick babies in that same bay window. And when they were wide awake and prettily dressed, she exhibited them with motherly pride to the boys and girls who passed by. Thus, early in life, Bertha Brightwood was learning the art of making others happy.

Once, when the hall door was wide open, little Bertha ran quickly down the steps in the street, with one of her sweetest dollies, and thrust it into the hands of a ragged little girl, saying, "It's 'oo dollie. Take dollie," greatly to the amazement of the forlorn child. The servant who was sweeping the hall, seeing Bertha's ruthless act, rushed out, and snatching the doll from the astonished little girl, seized Bertha and carried her screaming and struggling into the house. When, attracted by the tumult, Aunt Hannah entered the room, she found Bertha in the bay window, in a towering passion, if this expression may be applied to a child not yet three feet tall. There she stood stamping her feet, and shaking her fists in helpless rage, while Mary was trying to calm and quiet her. Her aunt did not chide nor try to correct her, but endeavored to soothe and comfort the disappointed child. When her father was informed of this incident he quietly remarked that it was not an unpromising token of the child's nature.

That night, when Bertha was put to bed by Aunt Hannah, her father said to her: "Bertie, dear, papa is glad that you wanted to give the little girl your pretty dollie. When she comes again to the bay window, Mary may call her in, and you may give her the doll if you like. But, Bertie, papa was sorry that you were angry and struck Mary. That was wrong." So, kissing his little daughter, he left her with her aunt, who was deeply touched to hear the tearful child add to her usual prayer, a petition to Jesus to make her good.

As a maiden in her teens, Bertha loved the retreat of her bay window. There she read and studied, wrote her letters on her lap, and did her needle work; there, also, she entertained her companions, and oftentimes sat alone, content with her own society and the varied scenes of the public streets.

II.

One afternoon, late in December, Miss Bertha Brightwood sat in the bay window of the family sitting room occupied with her needle work and her thoughts. Hands and brains were busy.

Something, evidently far more important than her work, was occupying her thoughts, for when her task was completed, she still sat meditatively, with downcast eyes, and it was no less evident that happy thoughts were in her mind, for when she lifted her face to look out of the window, it was bright and gladsome, as speaking to herself, she exclaimed: "I will consult papa about this matter after tea!"

Immediately after supper Dr. Brightwood entered his office, as was his wont, to record the calls of the afternoon. Hardly was he seated at his desk, when Bertha crept silently in and stood behind his chair.

"Papa," she asked, "are you too busy?"

"What is wanted, Bertha?"

"A little talk with you."

"Sit down. I'm all attention."

"You know, papa, that I was born on Christmas day."

"Yes, Bertha, I have very good reasons for remembering that."

"Don't you think it was fortunate, papa?"

"First, let us decide whether it was fortunate that you were born at all."

"The idea! Of course it was!"

"Just tell me, now, Miss Brightwood, what makes you think so?" And as he spoke, he wheeled round in his office chair, and presented a whimsical face to his daughter.

"Why, papa! Because it is so nice to be living in this beautiful world, and to dwell in this lovely home; so nice to have such a dear papa and good Aunt Hannah; so nice to sit in my bay window, and look out upon the pleasant street; so nice to watch for you to come home, and so awful nice when you do come, papa."

"And, pray, is there anything in this wide world that isn't nice in the eyes of Miss Bertha Brightwood?" exclaimed her father, as he fixed his admiring gaze upon the enthusiastic maiden.

"Yes, indeed, papa, lots of sad things."

"Pray, what may they be?"

"Well, papa, it's not a bit nice when you have to get up in the middle of the night, to hear the door shut behind you, and know that you will come home so tired in the morning; it isn't nice to know that people are sick and suffering; it isn't nice to see the sad faces of the poor folks who go by my bay window; it isn't nice to look upon hungry and ragged children and wretched cripples. How I pity them! How I wish I had power to wield the wizard's wand and change them all into happy, wholesome looking people! Oh! I would take the pallor out of their cheeks, the pain out of their hearts, and the hunger out of their stomachs."

"You had best begin with their stomachs, my sweet fairy. A peaceful stomach is often the best remedy for a pallid face. What a marvelous reformer you would make, waving your magical wand, at all the straggling street gamins and beggars that pass your bay window. Jails, reform schools and almshouses would soon be useless institutions, for the city paupers and criminals would throng to your bay window and be instantly transformed into happy, respectable people. What you would do for one numerous class of unfortunates I am at a loss to imagine."

"What class?"

"The dudes."

"Oh! I would change them all into harmless monkeys for the public amusement," replied the laughing girl.

"No great transformation would be required, Bertha," and father and daughter laughed merrily together. "But seriously, my radiant fairy, could you, by your method, make wretched people better, or even happier? Can you make a clock keep good time by brightening its dial?"

"No, indeed, papa, but I do think there are many unfortunate and wretched people who would be just as respectable as we are, if only their conditions were favorable."

"Thank you for my share in that compliment, and let me admit that there is much sound sense in your opinion. But why do you think it so fortunate that you were born on Christmas Day?"

"Because I can celebrate my birthday in honor of our Lord's nativity, and besides, it makes me think of myself as your Christmas gift."

"And so, indeed, you were, Bertha, the most precious one I ever received; it has been increasing in value and beauty ever since you were born." Her father spoke with a voice full of tenderness, and with deeper emotion, he added: "God alone knows what I should do without you."

There was silence for a moment, in which both father and daughter felt the power of that bond of mutual love and dependence which no words could express. Then Bertha said: "Father, all the afternoon I have been thinking and planning about my birthday party, which you promised me, and I have come to ask your permission to arrange it in my own way."

"What is your own way?"

"The Lord's way."

"Explain yourself, Bertha."

Bertha rose from her chair, and bringing her open Bible to her father, she silently pointed to the passage in Luke XIV, 12-15, and Dr. Brightwood read these words: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makes a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

"Bertha, who has been preaching to you about this text?"

"No one, papa, but my conscience."

"Who, then, has been preaching to your conscience?"

"The Spirit of Truth, I think, papa, for when I read that passage this afternoon as my Scriptural lesson for the day, its meaning flashed upon my mind, and the desire came into my heart to observe my Christmas birthday feast after our Lord's precept."

"What a sweet little Christian you are, Bertha! Your thought and desire are most commendable. They honor both your head and your heart. But do you really suppose that our Lord's beautiful precept was intended to govern our modern social life? Is it wrong to feast our relatives and friends?"

"Oh, no, papa, Christ cannot mean that."

"Well, are we to understand that in these days the Lord would have us provide banquets for paupers, cripples and criminals?"

"You must leave out the criminals, papa; Jesus says, 'The poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind'. He means the unfortunate and the wretched, but not the wicked."

"But you know, Bertha, that sin and crime are the most prolific sources of poverty and misery."

"To be sure, papa, but you and I know many poverty stricken, wretched homes which are not made so by wickedness, but by sheer misfortune."

"I must admit the soundness of your reasoning, and I am delighted to have you pose as the champion of the unfortunate."

"Now, papa, I don't like to argue about this matter, nor do I want to pose as a champion of the unfortunate, much less as a public reformer, but, papa, I do want to be a friend of the poor and suffering, and I wish you would tell me what Christ does mean by these words you have heard."

"Doubtless, Bertha, He designed to illustrate the principle that Christian benevolence should be unselfish in its motive and aim. 'Give, hoping for nothing again,' expresses the principle. When in Christian love, we extend any form of relief to the poor, we observe the principle without a literal compliance with the precept."

"Very good, papa! But may we not, if we choose, illustrate the principle by observing the precept?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I desire to do this. I believe that, above all other days, Christmas Day affords a proper occasion for such a practical illustration of our Lord's teaching."

"Go on, Bertha, I am deeply interested in your thoughts and wish to know all about your plans."

"Suppose, papa, instead of making a birthday party and banquet for my dearest associates, I invite those of my acquaintance who are poor or unhappy in their social surroundings, and that instead of receiving beautiful gifts from yourself and Aunt Hannah you permit me to expend the money they would cost upon my humble guests. Does this seem an impracticable scheme, papa?"

"No, not impracticable, but would these poor people be willingly your humble guests to such a charity feast, even

if perfumed notes of invitation were sent to them?"

"Perhaps not, papa, unless they were made to realize that you loved them and cared for them."

"I must, then, cultivate their acquaintance and make them feel that I am not too proud or high minded for their company."

"You have overshot the mark a little, papa. You need not establish intimate social relations with the poor, only visit them in Christ's name, and make them feel that you have sympathy for them, and are interested in their welfare."

Dr. Brightwood bowed his head in silence for a moment. His heart was welling with deep emotions. He always had adored his daughter, but now he realized, as never before, the spiritual wealth of her nature. He felt that the Spirit of Truth was indeed teaching her, and that her heart and mind were growing in the beauty of holiness.

"Bertha, dear," he said, taking both her hands in his own, "I will help you to realize your plan, if your Aunt Hannah does not object to it too strongly, for it cannot be carried out without her interest and aid."

"Oh! Thank you! Thank you!" Bertha exclaimed.

"If I provide the feast, you will provide the guests, I presume?"

"Yes, papa, but I shall need some money."

"What's the money for?"

"Some of my guests will require fixing up a little for the feast."

"Ho! Ho! The cripples will need new crutches, I suppose," her father laughingly replied.

The door bell now rang, and Bertha tripped out of the office as the caller passed in.

The girl was happy and hopeful, but the possibility of Aunt Hannah's objections gave her no little apprehension.

III.

Aunt Hannah Brightwood had been the mistress of her brother's household since the death of his wife and, notwithstanding some peculiarities of disposition, she was admirably fitted for the position. Having long passed the age of matrimonial hopes, she had quietly accepted it as her mission to keep her brother's home in good order, and to train his daughter in the way she ought to go.

Like her brother, whom she revered as well as loved, she possessed an ingrained sense of justice, and a nature strongly benevolent. Possibly her sense of justice was, if not too keen, yet likely to be too quick and sharp, causing her justice sometimes to wear the look of resentment.

Aunt Hannah believed in herself, and this made her self-sufficient. When once she had formed her opinion concerning a person or matter, she was past persuasion, and quite impervious to reason. All who differed from her judgment were, unquestionably, in the wrong. Neither their opinions nor their reasonings could possibly be sound, or worthy of consideration. If Aunt Hannah Brightwood had not been a woman of quick sympathies and self-sacrificing spirit, this supreme faith in herself would have made her unlovely.

Aunt Hannah's objections had often been a terror to Bertha, and, dearly as she loved her, it was not that quality of love which casteth out all fear. Hence, it was not without some suspense and anxiety she waited to learn how her aunt felt about this change of her plan.

Dr. Brightwood was much pleased, and Bertha highly delighted to find that Miss Brightwood, instead of objecting to the plan, exclaimed: "It is just like the dear girl," and expressed her willingness to do all in her power to carry out Bertha's design.

Preparations were immediately begun in the kitchen of the Brightwood mansion. Aunt Hannah insisted upon making the cake and the mince pies herself. In the making of mincemeat, Aunt Hannah's self-sufficiency rose to its highest level.

"I don't claim," she said to her subordinate, "that I can make all kinds of pies equally well, but when it comes to mince pies, I will not give way to anybody. It is curious," she continued, "but it is a fact, nevertheless, one may take the same ingredients and mix them together in their way, and they will not come out the same as when I mix 'em. Mincemeat is something that every good cook can't make. It requires judgment."

"Miss Brightwood," the cook responded, obsequiously. "It's lucky the Lord gave you the gift of judgment. I'm quite sure my mince pies wouldn't be fit to eat, in your opinion."

"We all know you are a good cook, Mary, but it is altogether best that I should make the mincemeat."

The fact is, Mary was altogether willing that she should, although she secretly believed that she could make mince pies, or any other kind of pies, equally as good as could Hannah Brightwood, an opinion, however, she was wise enough not to express in the presence of her mistress.

While these preparations were in progress in the kitchen, Bertha was engaged in making calls upon the families of the community known to her, where she found the desired human material to grace her birthday banquet. Several mornings were devoted to this pleasant task, and the result was, some twenty personal invitations were extended to boys and girls to her birthday party. They were, for the most part, children of her acquaintance, whose homes she had often visited, and blessed by her presence.

IV.

Two days before Christmas, one afternoon, three rosy, merry, noisy maidens were seated in Bertha's bay window. One was Bertha, herself, and the other two were her classmates in the high school. It is difficult to tell which were the most active, their busy tongues, or their bright needles. As these happy girls talked and toiled, peals of laughter resounded through the house from that bay window, which were heard by pedestrians on the street, as they passed by, causing many interested and smiling glances towards the merry maidens, who were making candy bags of curious pattern and unusual capacity, which were not completed until twenty of the receptacles were ornamented by twenty embroidered letters.

This task accomplished, the girls laid aside their needles for a recess of fun and frolic, during which Aunt Hannah once looked in with stern countenance and uplifted finger, but seeing those giddy girls whirling around the sitting room hand in hand, singing a college song, her countenance instantly relaxed into a benignant smile, her admonitory finger dropped, and she mildly remarked: "Dear girls, do be careful and not smash anything."

The frolic ended, those breathless girls gathered about the piano, and then followed a series of piano duets, Christmas ballads and solos, with finally a humorous recitation, all of which was a rehearsal of the entertainment prepared for Bertha's birthday party.

At half past four, just as the setting sun was reflecting its last rays upon Bertha's bay window, her two friends left the house, and Bertha stood in the bay window watching their retreating forms. "The dear girls—how I love them,"

she murmured, "how sweet it was of them to come and help me. I do believe they are just as much interested in my birthday party as I am myself."

A most charming picture she made, standing there, the golden radiance of the sunset illuminating her beautiful face, and revealing the glad and grateful emotions of her happy heart.

As she turned to leave the window, she was conscious of being observed. A stranger stood upon the door steps of the house, gazing upon her with a stare so fixed and penetrating that Bertha was startled. She made an effort to withdraw, but her feet seemed riveted to the floor. The personality of the man both repelled and attracted her. As she stood, transfixed, she saw an expression of pain pass over the stranger's face and heard him groan, as if in agony, and exclaimed: "Oh! My God! My God!" The thought that the man was ill and suffering, and was seeking her father for medical aid, passed through Bertha's mind, and she called aloud for her Aunt Hannah to come quickly. Her aunt failed to hear, but the sound of her voice caused the man to groan again, to descend from the steps, and pass with unsteady gait up the street.

Recovering somewhat from her shock, Bertha drew down the curtains and threw herself into a chair. The more she thought upon the incident, the more perplexed she became. Perhaps, she thought, the man was intoxicated, but this theory failed to account for his intense gaze, the agony in his face, the sharp cry, and abrupt withdrawal. Was he an insane man? Had some strange hallucination possessed his mind and caused his distress? The more she pondered upon the man's conduct the deeper the mystery became, and the more was she troubled and fearful. While thus absorbed in thought Dr. Brightwood entered the room.

One glance upon his daughter's face told him that she was ill.

"What has happened, Bertha? Are you in pain?"

"No, papa, but I have had such a start, almost a fright in my bay window," and in a very nervous manner Bertha described what had happened. During her recital of the strange incident Dr. Brightwood's face underwent rapid transformations, all of which Bertha's quick eye observed, and she said:

"Don't be troubled about the man. I don't think he meant any harm. Perhaps he was seeking you for medical advice, or he may be deranged; his actions were very strange."

"Bertha, how old a man was he?"

"Forty-two or three, I should think."

"Did he appear to be poor?"

"Rather so, but I am sure he was in poor health."

"Was he dark complexioned?"

"Yes."

"Any peculiarity about his eyes?"

"Yes, one was partially closed."

Dr. Brightwood's face increased in pallor and his agitation was noticeable.

"Father, do you know this man?"

"I never saw him in my life, Bertha."

"Are you ill, papa? Shall I call Aunt Hannah?"

"No, I will lie down on the lounge for a little while. Don't be alarmed, Bertha, I shall not faint, but stay with me. Some time I will explain to you my knowledge about this man, and the distress his unexpected presence at my door has occasioned me. Don't speak of this incident to any one, nor sit, for the present, in your bay window."

Bertha was sorely perplexed over the whole matter, but her anxiety for her father diverted her mind from the subject.

Late that night, long after Bertha was sleeping, Dr. Brightwood and his sister Hannah sat together in his office, engaged in subdued conversation.

V.

Immediately after breakfast the next morning Dr. Brightwood led his daughter into the office, and closing the door, he said:

"Bertha, you have told me that Christmas Day makes you think of yourself as God's gift to me, and so you are, indeed. I have often called you my Christmas gift, but I have never explained all that I meant by that statement; I have hoped that I should never need to tell you how God gave you to me. But now I must tell you all. The one great secret of my life must be disclosed to you. The revelation will cause you great grief; it will be a very sad surprise. God will give you grace to bear the burden.

"Bertha, you are my daughter—my only daughter and child, legally, yes, divinely so, but you were not born in my home. Sixteen years ago I bore you in my arms to my home, in the far West, and gave you, a motherless babe, into the care of my young wife, as God's Christmas gift to us. You were a most welcome gift, for one month before God had taken our first and only child from us. We were under the shadow of deep sorrow when you came, as a little stranger, to our home and our hearts to fill the place made vacant by the death of our little Bertha. We gave you her name, as we gave you our love. So Bertha, you are my daughter by God's gift, and by divine right. Thus, Bertha, the secret so hard for me to disclose, and for you to learn, is revealed."

His daughter listened with increasing interest, and deepening inward pain to the end of her father's story. When he ceased, she threw herself speechless and sobbing into his arms, and buried her face on his shoulder. There was a

painful silence, broken only by Bertha's sobs. At length her father said:

"I have kept this secret for your sake, Bertha, and now for your sake it is revealed."

"I knew, father, that trouble was coming, but I never dreamed of this."

"Now, Bertha, if you feel able to bear it, I will tell you the story of your birth sixteen years ago, on Christmas Day, very early in the morning."

"I had best know all," the poor girl said.

"It may be briefly told, and some other time I will speak more fully about your mother and your birth."

"Your mother was an orphan English girl, having no relations in this country. A young woman of beautiful face and form, she was married in a Southern city to a young man who belonged to a wealthy and aristocratic family. The marriage displeased his parents, and he was disowned and disinherited.

"He had been wild and reckless in his early youth, was dismissed with dishonor from college in his senior year, because of dissipation. Having won the affections of your mother, he, for the love of her, renounced his bad habits, and for nearly a year after their marriage, he was a temperate and industrious man. Then his health began to fail, and misfortune followed. This led to discouragement and a revival of his former drinking habits. Naturally of a proud and passionate nature, he became morose and irritable. In a quarrel with a companion, with whom he had been drinking, he struck him a deadly blow, in fierce anger. The death of his friend filled him with remorse and fear, and he fled from home, leaving his poor wife to bear the sorrow and shame of his crime.

"Three months later she received from him a letter, informing her that he was working in the woods of Michi-

gan, and beseeching her to meet him in a city on the shore of Lake Michigan, at a certain time and place.

"With heroic courage and devotion to her husband, she reached the appointed place, at the time fixed, but her husband never came. The bitter disappointment was more than her exhausted frame could bear. She was prostrated by sickness, among strangers. The night before Christmas, sixteen years ago to-morrow, I was summoned to her bedside. Through the long night I remained with her, and learned from her lips the sad story I have told you. She died soon after your birth. Never can I forget the beseeching appeal of her beautiful eyes, as she prayed me to care for her helpless babe, and to show kindness to her husband, should I ever meet him. The day after I carried you to my house, I saw your mother buried, and later, I placed a stone at her grave, marked, "Martha Harmon," and beneath the name the date of her death.

"I said nothing to anyone about your birth. Only the woman who was with me at your birth knows that I took you away. One month later I removed from the West to New England. Probably no person in New England knows I am not your real father, unless it be the strange man who so disturbed you at the bay window."

Bertha gave a convulsive start, and her father continued: "That man, I have good reason to believe, is your wretched father, whom I had supposed was long ago dead. It was your most striking resemblance to your mother that paralyzed him with wonder, and caused his pain. Without doubt he was seeking me, having probably discovered that one, Dr. Brightwood, was with his wife when she died. I have hourly been expecting a visit from him. He may possibly fear to come again. You know now, why I was forced to reveal to you your parentage. I would not risk,

even for an hour, the possibility of your learning it from any other lips than mine."

"If you have never seen the man, how can you be so sure that he is my mother's husband?" asked Bertha.

"Because of this photograph, which your mother gave me, and by your account of the man," and Dr. Brightwood gave the picture he had taken from his pocket, to Bertha.

"It is the man!" The girl exclaimed, as soon as she had glanced at it. "Oh! papa! I must never—I can never see this man! He must never come here! Promise me that he never shall know me! I never—never, can think of him as my father!"

"That must all be left with God," her father said, solemnly. "Remember, Bertha, no earthly power can take you from me. In the eye of the law you are my daughter, by every tie of love and care and training. Mine, too, by the gift of God."

"It is enough, dear papa. We will leave it all with God."

"Bertha, I must not forget my promise to your dying mother. If God gives me opportunity, I must show kindness to your father."

"Papa, may God grant that I shall never see his face again," Bertha said, and Dr. Brightwood responded with an audible "Amen."

The prayer was heard and answered, as the sequel of our story will reveal.

The dreaded ordeal was now passed; Dr. Brightwood was a happier man. Bertha rose up in the strength of her Christian faith in this crisis of her maidenhood. Under the shadow of her secret sorrow, she was drawing more and more into the sunshine of God's love.

VI.

Very late in the evening of that sorrowful day before Christmas, Dr. Brightwood was unexpectedly called from his home just as he was preparing to retire for the night The call was imperative, and he must go at once.

Muffled in his great ulster, as he stepped out into the keen air, he recalled that about the same hour, sixteen years before, he went from his Western home to the bedside of Bertha's mother. That night was dark and stormy. This night was clear and radiant, with the light of the full moon. Then a dying woman sought his sympathy and his help. Now, a dying man was anxiously waiting for his coming, whose last energies were exerted to live until he came.

Twenty minutes later he entered a room in an East End lodging house, and his first glance upon the man lying on the bed told him that he was dying, and the same glance assured him also that the dying man was Philip Harmon.

"I thank my God that you have come, Dr. Brightwood," was the sufferer's feeble salutation. "There is no time to lose. I felt that I must see you and speak with you before I die. I have no strength to say to you all I would. Take the letter from under my pillow; it will give you the information I wish to impart to you."

Dr. Brightwood drew the letter from beneath the pillow. It was directed to himself.

"I sought to see you in your home, Doctor. I saw the face of an angel in the bay window of your house. It seemed a vision from heaven, and it smote me with pangs of remorse and fear. It was the face—the form—the eyes—the hair, of my dead wife. I saw again the maiden I had loved, and whose life I had blighted. I heard, too,

her voice, its very accents were familiar. I knew my appearance had frightened her, and I turned away, with what anguish of heart God only knows." Here the dying man paused, through sheer exhaustion, and Dr. Brightwood thought he would never speak again. His eyes were closed, and his face was full of pain. A few minutes later he opened his eyes wide, and fixing them upon Dr. Brightwood's face, he slowly asked, "Doctor, is she your own daughter?"

Dr. Brightwood bowed over the dying man and said: "Philip Harmon, she is your own daughter, and my daughter by adoption."

"I thought it must be so," he said. "God bless her! God bless her! Tell her I die blessing her. Tell her God has forgiven my sins."

"Doctor, did my poor wife leave any word for me?"

"Her last words were prayers for you. She loved you to the end," Dr. Brightwood replied.

"God have mercy upon me. I hope to meet her in heaven."

His voice was almost inaudible. Again his lips moved. Dr. Brightwood bent low to catch his words. He was praying for his daughter. He never spoke again. Philip Harmon was with his Maker.

There is suffering in this world for the sins of others which makes mortals saintly. There is suffering in this world which cannot redeem the soul, but which often brings to the sinner's heart the redeeming grace of God.

When Dr. Brightwood reached his home, he replenished his office fire, and sat down to read Philip Harmon's letter. It was written in pencil, with a weak and trembling hand. and was not easily deciphered. It explained why Philip Harmon had failed to meet his wife at the appointed time. He was on his way to meet her, when he learned that a

detective had followed her from the East, and again he was driven to flight. By the way of the lakes, he reached the St. Lawrence River and the City of Quebec. Then he took ship for Europe, and from thence went to South Africa, where for fifteen years he lived in constant fear of discovery. His return to America was actuated solely by the hope of seeing his wife again. Reaching at length the Western city, where he had hoped to join his wife, he learned the fact of her death, and the name of the attending physician. He then retraced his steps back to New England, and, after many difficulties, and great suffering, he found Dr. Brightwood's residence.

The sight of Bertha in her bay window had given him such a nervous shock that he was prostrated by weakness and fear. The night after that experience was spent in great agony of mind, and during the greater part of the following day he was unconscious and delirious. Retiring in the evening, he became rational and implored the city physician who attended him to send for Dr. Brightwood. The letter ended with the request that if possible, he might be buried by the side of his wife.

Not until the holidays were passed did Dr. Brightwood show the letter to Bertha, or speak of Philip Harmon.

VII.

Bertha's sixteenth birthday passed happily, notwithstanding the secret sorrow that burdened her heart. In loving ministrations to others, her mind and energies were employed, and spiritual joys, like Christ's own joys, which abode with Him amid all His sorrows, were, in some measure, the possession of her soul.

All her beneficent designs respecting her Christmas birthday party were carried out, and her hopes more than fulfilled. Out of many humble homes, some of them the abodes of suffering, and all of them dwelling places of poverty, there came to her home, twenty, clean, bright faced boys and girls, to enjoy her Christmas hospitalities. That bountiful and beautiful Christmas feast was a banquet of love. It had its conception, and was all arranged and realized in a maiden's love of Christ. It was the Christ love in Bertha's heart that inspired the feast and made it beautiful. In the gladness of those happy children, Bertha was, for a time, forgetful of her own deep sorrow.

No adequate description of the festivities can be given. To those poor children the dinner was marvelous. One little girl deeply touched the tender chords of Dr. Brightwood's heart by saying "I never had a Christmas dinner before." After the dinner, came the sociable and the frolic. Bertha and her companions had arranged everything for the happiness of their little guests. Games and pastimes were followed by the entertainment, which had been so carefully planned, and all of which contributed to the delight of the children.

Last of all was something not on the program, something that was a great surprise to Bertha herself, and which

petrified Aunt Hannah into mute astonishment, something that never had happened before, a speech from Dr. Brightwood.

It came about on this wise. The good Doctor, whose heart was full of the Christmas joy of the occasion, began to speak a few farewell words to the children who were preparing to go home. While he was speaking, the inward joy found an outlet in his voice, then his mind was inspired with the glow of his emotion and that opened too, and voice caught the fervor of his heart and mind and the waters of wisdom poured forth. It was an unreportable speech. In it precept and pleasantry, counsel and kindness, seriousness and mirthfulness were so admirably blended that it would be equally truthful to report it as a sound, sensible and humorous address to the young.

It gave Bertha satisfaction, because it was entirely unexpected, and because it taught those boys and girls that Christmas, Christ's mass, or meeting day, above all other days, was the children's day, when they should be made happy and taught to love and obey the blessed Saviour who was once a child on earth.

Late that afternoon, when the setting sun was again bathing Bertha's bay window in its soft, pure light, the neighbors were attracted to their front windows by the chatter and clatter of a group of animated juveniles scampering down the broad front steps of Dr. Brightwood's mansion. Each had a shining face, each held an embroidered muslin bag, and each clutched it with a miser's grasp, as if it contained a priceless treasure. And there stood Bertha, in her bay window, with her two friends, until the last one of her guests was out of sight.

"Blest be Bertha Brightwood!" one of the neighbors exclaimed to another, as they beheld the scene. "If there

were more like her in this weary world it would be a happier world for the poor people to live in."

Thus ended Bertha's birthday party. But its beneficent influence ended not with that day. Something of her own love was kindled in the hearts of her youthful guests, something of its grace and beauty were carried into other homes as an abiding benediction upon the household. In those homes Bertha's name was remembered with reverence and gratitude. Nor did her name alone live in the hearts of those she had served, but through her Christ-like love, the name of Christ was revered and loved in the homes of her guests.

VIII.

When the Winter was passed, and nature was again at work clothing the earth with verdure, and the gardens were beginning to give promise of Summer's bloom and beauty, Dr. Brightwood and Bertha stood one day by two graves, in the beautiful cemetery of the city in which they dwelt. Fresh cut flowers rested their delicate petals against the marble tablets upon which were chiseled the names of Philip and Martha Harmon, while on the base which joined them together was this inscription: "Separated on Earth—United in Heaven." The inscription was Bertha's, and it expressed the hope which comforted her heart.

The remains of Bertha's mother had been removed by Dr. Brightwood from their grave in the far west and placed beside those of her father.

Perhaps, if we could understand all of God's plans, we should see that the sorrow and the suffering of the earthly separation were needful for the realization of the peace and bliss of the heavenly reunion.

Silently and thoughtfully father and daughter walked from the cemetery. At length the voice of Bertha broke the silence with a remark which revealed the thoughts of her heart.

"Papa, I still think it was fortunate that I was born on Christmas Day."

"Indeed, it was," her father rejoined, "very fortunate for me, that I received on that Christmas morning such a priceless gift from God."

And they walked forth from the city of the dead to devote themselves henceforth to Christian service in the throbbing, suffering city of the living.

AN UNEXPECTED CHRISTMAS

A STORY FOR GIRLS

"Didn't those girls run like mad, though! What are they hiding away from you for, Jennie?"

"For fun, I suppose," replied the girl.

"Not for your fun, I guess. They are a trio of saucy girls. I'd like to turn the laugh on them,—I would. Say, Jennie, I'll go and lock them in, and not let them out until they promise to apologize to you for their impudence."

"Wouldn't have you do it, Harry, for the world. Let them enjoy their sport. They think I'll hunt for them, but I won't."

"You are vexed, ain't you, Jennie,—real mad inside?" said young Edmunds.

"No, I'm not, Harry. But I don't understand why the girls want to tease me so. They are dear, good girls, after all. I oughtn't to feel hurt. I guess I'll go back and wait for them to come out."

"Now, Jennie, tell me the square truth. You don't really think they are 'good girls'. You know they are just a little mean and hateful."

"O, Harry, don't say that. They are not hateful. They are only thoughtless. They did it only in sport. I do love them, dearly."

"It was selfish sport all the same. They ought to be ashamed of themselves; but Jennie, I'm glad after all that they are in that stable, for I want your company. Will you take a sleighride with me this afternoon?"

"O, yes, Harry, I'll be delighted. I'll run home and ask mother if I may go."

"No need of that, Jennie, besides, you've run enough for your health this afternoon. I called for you at your home, and your mother has consented. My horse is harnessed. Let's be off at once."

"But, Harry, I shall need my thick cloak," said the happy girl.

"We will drive over and get it," the young man replied.

In a few minutes they were prepared for the ride. Leaving Mr. Bolton's house, Harry drove, purposely, down by Dr. Wheeler's residence, hoping to meet those "three saucy girls." He was not disappointed, for they were just coming out of the yard, in anything but a merry mood. Their plan for fun had somehow miserably failed.

With studious politeness, Harry Edmunds lifted his cap, and, with a radiant face, Jennie gave them a smiling bow, as they dashed by in fine style. The astonished maidens turned and gazed after them.

"Well! I never!" exclaimed Bertha, "If Jennie isn't a lucky girl! But what a frightful looking cloak she has on. I should think Harry would want a stylish girl to go with his splendid turnout."

"It's the girl in the cloak, not the cloak on the girl, that Harry cares for," his sister Blanche quietly remarked.

"I never knew that Harry was partial to Jennie," said Bertha.

"I knew it," Maude rejoined. She was Jennie's bosom friend.

"You ought to hear the fine things Harry says about Jennie Bolton," observed Blanche.

"Do tell us, Blanche," said Bertha, entreatingly.

"Well, he says Jennie Bolton has the sweetest face, and the best disposition, of any girl in town, replied Blanche.

"Then your precious brother knows all the girls in town, does he?" Bertha retorted.

"He knows all of us, at any rate," said Maude.

"Yes, he does," snapped out Bertha, "and I am sure we have little reason to be grateful for the indirect compliment he has paid us."

"I, for one, don't feel at all injured by Harry's opinion, but commend his good judgment," said Maude.

"So do I," responded Blanche.

"How should you like to have Jennie Bolton for a sister-in-law, Blanche?" Bertha asked, with an unmistakable tinge of sarcasm in her voice.

"I don't feel called upon to answer that question," replied Blanche, "but I'll tell you, girls, there's one thing Harry does like in Jennie."

"O, tell us what it is," demanded her companions.

"Her Christian spirit," Maude answered.

"Why didn't you say her piety?" Bertha asked scornfully.

"Because Harry didn't use that term," his sister replied, with sharpness.

"Girls, do you know that Jennie and her father are to unite with the church the first Sunday of the new year?" asked Maude.

"Does Harry know it, Blanche?" Bertha asked.

"Yes, he referred to the matter this morning, and said it was the proper thing for Jennie to do. I'll tell you something, girls, that will surprise you. Since Harry has been to college he has become religious."

"That's splendid news!" exclaimed Maude Lewis. The girl's enthusiasm revealed her own religious spirit. A low laugh led by Bertha, followed.

Then the girls walked on for some time in silence, each occupied with her own thoughts. They all admired Harry Edmunds, and believed in Jennie Bolton. Even Bertha Wheeler, inwardly, respected the religious spirit of her school mate. She had, as her companions knew, a thorough liking for Harry Edmunds, and her pride was not a little mortified by the young man's preference for the companionship of Jennie Bolton.

Harry Edmunds was the only son of the leading lawyer and richest citizen of the town. His father was a Christian

man, the Sunday School teacher of the four young ladies, whose conversation we have recorded. Lawyer Edmunds had sent his son to college in the expectation that he would choose the law as his profession.

Bertha Wheeler was the daughter of the village physician, whose medical skill and kindly heart made him one of the most influential and popular citizens of the town.

The father of Maude Lewis was a man of high standing in the community, having been for several years the superintendent of the Randolph Machine Works.

Mr. James Bolton, Jennie's father, was a mechanic in the employ of Mr. Lewis. For many weeks he had been confined to his home by sickness, from which he was now slowly recovering.

While Harry and Jennie are enjoying their sleigh-ride, let us glance into Mr. James Bolton's home. The sick man is sitting bolstered up, in a large wooden rocker, while his wife sits near him, busily sewing.

"Wife, this is a wonderful December day, clear sunshine, mild air, and glorious sleighing. I am very glad Jennie has such an opportunity to enjoy it, she is so fond of sleigh-riding," remarked Mr. Bolton.

"Just what I was thinking," replied his wife. "What a manly lad Harry Edmunds is. Looks wonderfully like his father. I hope he will make as good a man."

"And I hope he will make as good a lawyer," responded her husband.

"He seems to like our Jennie's company," mused Mrs. Bolton, half audibly.

"Why shouldn't he? Jennie is neither stupid nor ill-looking," Mr. Bolton said, in a negative way, but with positive emphasis.

"You mean to say that Jennie is both a handsome and intelligent girl," said Mrs. Bolton, putting her husband's

thought in more literary phrase, which she was in the habit of doing.

"That's my idea, exactly," responded her husband.

"I hope Jennie won't lay Harry's attentions too much at heart. He evidently has a school-boy's fondness for her," Mrs. Bolton observed, and then relapsed into silence, which was broken, a few minutes later, by a remark from Mr. Bolton, which explained the seriousness which had come over his face.

"Christmas comes next week, wife, and for the first time in my life I am sorry it is near at hand."

"Why are you sorry, James?"

"Because I haven't a dollar nor a dime to spend for Christmas."

"Don't let that trouble you, James. We can have the joy of Christmas without its festivity," said his wife.

But notwithstanding Mrs. Bolton's words of comfort, tears dimmed her eyes, which her husband observed.

"If 'twould do any good, I could cry, too, Maria. I am sad for the children, we've always made so much of Christmas."

"We will observe it in our hearts, husband, and be happy. Surely we have great reason for gratitude and joy over your recovery. It is so good to see you growing stronger every day."

"Mind, I'm not complaining, wife. I have cause for thanksgiving. Dr. Wheeler has saved my life, and Judge Edmunds has saved my soul," Mr. Bolton said, with a voice full of gratitude.

Judge Edmunds, for such he was called, by his fellow citizens, was, as we have intimated, Jennie Bolton's Sunday School teacher, and a most faithful one he had been. At Jennie's request, he had visited her father during his long

sickness, and the united prayer and faith of teacher and scholar had resulted in Mr. Bolton's conversion.

Dr. Wheeler had told Mr. Bolton that it would require another month to put him in good condition for work. He had already been confined to his home for two months, and the prospect of no income from labor for another month, was very disheartening to him.

Mr. and Mrs. Bolton were especially sorry for Jennie, whose companions were already making preparation for the Christmas holidays. Jennie's wardrobe, too, sadly needed replenishing. Above all things else, she needed a new cloak for the winter, but her parents saw no possible way of supplying their daughter's need.

Jennie and her mother had talked the matter over together, and the girl had bravely accepted what she termed "the inevitable." "There's one good thing about my old faded cloak," she said; "it will keep me warm. If it isn't stylish, it is comfortable. Dress doesn't make the woman, mother, so I'll swallow my pride and be independent."

But swallowing pride doesn't get rid of it, as we all know, and making up one's mind not to care, while it is an heroic effort, does not remove care. Resignation does strengthen the heart and make one brave and cheerful, but the burden is borne all the same—no, not the same, for it is borne in meekness and submission to the divine will.

An hour later, jingling sleigh-bells and merry laughter were heard outside Mr. Bolton's cottage, and, soon after, Jennie entered, with sparkling eyes and rosy cheeks, a picture of beauty and gladness.

"Oh, papa, dear, I've had a splendid ride. Harry's horse is a splendid pacer. We went like the wind, and the air was delightful.

"And I presume Harry was just splendid, too," her father added, smiling, as he gazed upon his fair daughter in paternal love and admiration.

His remark illicited no remark from Jennie, who immediately became very much occupied in taking off her hat, cloak, and gloves, and began to talk rapidly to her mother.

"Harry has been telling me, mother, all about his college life. It must be fine to be a college boy. But what interested me most was his account of the revival in the college, and the religious work now going on among the students. You know Harry is a fine singer, and he has been appointed the leader of the College Praying Band. Isn't it nice that Harry has become a Christian?"

"I am greatly rejoiced to hear of Harry's conversion. It is a great gain to the cause of Christ when a young man becomes an active Christian," her mother replied.

There was a deep current of joy flowing through Jennie Bolton's heart. Her gladness made her father feel stronger; it was a moral tonic to his soul.

At the supper table that evening, Harry Edmunds asked his sister Blanche if she had enjoyed the afternoon with the girls, and she replied, rather shortly, that they had had a real stupid time. "Bertha," she said, "was cross, and Maude was silent, and I was miserable," and Harry said, "It was a just reward for bad behavior."

II.

Maude Lewis separated from her companions that mid-December afternoon in a troubled state of mind. She was thoroughly dissatisfied with herself. She knew that Jennie's feelings had been wounded by their thoughtless sport, and that she had good cause for resentment. When Maude remembered that Jennie had joined their company on her own pressing invitation, and that she had promised her a good time, she was mortified and vexed with herself over the part she had taken in the transaction.

On her way home she resolved that she would go over to see Jennie immediately after tea, and ask her friend's forgiveness.

Seven o'clock that evening found Maude Lewis at Mr. Bolton's door.

Jennie welcomed her with a glad embrace, and a warm kiss, exclaiming:

"Oh, Maude! I'm glad you've come! I was just now trying to decide whether I ought to leave papa and mama and run over to see you, I have so many things to tell you."

"I am surprised, Jennie, that you thought of coming to see me, after our shabby treatment of you this afternoon," Maude replied.

"Let's not talk about that, Maude, I didn't mind, that is, I don't care, now. I know you like my company, if the other girls do not," Jennie replied, trying to comfort her friend, and speak the truth at the same time.

"I know you did care, Jennie, you did feel hurt. It was contemptible in me to leave you and join with them. I hate myself for it. I will never treat you so again. You will forgive me, Jennie?"

"More than forgive and forget, I'll love you forever,—forever and ever, you dear girl. Come, let's have a good talk."

After another embrace and another kiss, these two bosom friends sat down by the parlor fire, and for a whole hour their sweet voices mingled in confidential conversation. Is there any experience more delightful, more satisfying, than the close union of two youthful hearts in the companionship of loyal friendship? It is the need of every human soul,—the love that David bore to Jonathan—the love that Christ felt towards John! God pity the human heart that has never invaded and possessed another human heart.

The conversation of these two friends cannot be recorded. We can only indicate its themes. Harry Edmunds' name was frequently repeated. That "splendid sleigh-ride" was rapturously discussed. In truth, Jennie was drawn into a circumstantial narration by the sympathetic questioning of Maude, who repeatedly affirmed that she was so glad Harry had taken Jennie out to ride.

Finally, the conversation turned upon the conversion of young Edmunds, during which, Maude not only told her friend that she was rejoiced that Harry had become a Christian, but confessed her own desire to become a true disciple of Christ. This gave Jennie an opportunity she had much wished for, to open her heart to Maude about her own religious thought and feeling. Before Maude left Jennie's home that night, she had learned that no preparations were being made in Mr. Bolton's household for the usual Christmas observance, and she well understood the reason why.

Again, Maude returned home in a thoughtful mood, not about her own misery, but concerning the misfortune and hardships of the Bolton family.

Before Maude Lewis retired to her chamber that night she had a private talk with her father, and the next morning, Mr. Lewis had a private talk with Isaac Roberts, who was one of his foremen in the boiler shops, and under whom Mr. James Bolton had worked for several years.

There was a close connection between Maude's talk with her father, and her father's talk with Mr. Roberts, which will find explanation in the sequel of this story.

III.

At precisely four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, the great bell in the tower of the Randolph Machine Shops was rung, at the command of Superintendent Lewis.

Usually, the steam whistle announced the hour for quitting work. When the bell was rung instead, every workman in the various shops knew that all hands were expected to assemble in the large room of the foundry.

Soon they came, streaming in, talking and jesting with each other, and all wondering what was in the wind. In a few minute's time, one hundred and fifty-seven workmen were assembled, of all ages and sizes, and of several nationalities.

"Men," said Superintendent Lewis, "Foreman Isaac Roberts will state to you the object of this meeting."

Mr. Roberts now stepped forward,—a man, perhaps past forty years, with keen dark eyes, smooth face, and a business-like manner.

Every eye was fixed on him, as leaping up on a block, he thus addressed them:

"Brother workmen, at the request of Superintendent Lewis, I have to-day visited your friend, James Bolton, who has been two months absent from the works on account of severe sickness, from which he is now slowly recovering.

"Now, lads, you know how it would fare with most of us if, for two months, wages should cease, and family expenses go on increasing. Of course Jim Bolton has sadly run behind, and naturally, he is down-hearted over it, and this stands in the way of his speedy recovery. Boys, it is very hard sledding with Bolton just now. His family is large; young children to provide for; and Christmas near

at hand. How would you feel to-night, men, to be deeply in debt, no money coming in, and no prospect of earning a dollar for a month to come?

"Can't we all take hold—all pull together, and get friend Bolton out of his hard sledding? What say you to this, men?"

"We'll do it," shouted one, and scores of voices cried out "Yes! We'll do it! We can, and we will!"

"Then let all who will chip in something, when you receive your week's wages tonight," Mr. Lewis said.

"Boys," shouted out a big Scotchman, "I'll give Jim Bolton a week's wages."

"So will I," responded a score or two of others.

"That's very liberal," said Isaac Roberts, "I'll put in half of my week's pay."

"Men," cried Superintendent Lewis, "I am instructed in the office to say to you that whatever amount is raised from the shops will be covered by the company. So, if you want to squeeze the corporation, now's your opportunity. I'll add ten dollars."

"I'll be after squazing the concarn to the extint of worrn dollar," shouted a good natured Irishman, "but I'm thinking it will squaze me own pocket book the most."

"I'll deny meself of a wake's grog-money," another said, in a joking way.

"And will ye deny yeself the grog, as well as the muney, Pat Crowley? I'm after thinking ye'll get more binefit out of yer benivilence than will Mister Bolton, if ye do," put in another.

"Muney and grog, both, me friend," replied Pat. "Drink has done me sowl no good, nor me body aither, but it hasn't drownded out all me vartue. Niver has Pat Crowley forgotten the sarvice Jim Bolton rindered him on one sorry occasion."

This reminiscence of Mr. Crowley caused an audible smile all round. The men understood Pat's allusion to a drunken row, in which he was getting badly punished by two roughs, when Mr. Bolton passing by, demanded of them to stop beating the prostrate Mr. Crowley, whereupon being told to mind his own business, Mr. Bolton said that he intended to do just that, and instantly felled both Pat's assailants to the ground, with his strong fist, and got Mr. Crowley away.

"Men," said Mr. Lewis, "let me put in a word right here, Pat Crowley is a man, when he is Pat Crowley. A strong man when he is sober, in moral, as well as physical muscle, but, he is a poor chap, when in drink. Some of you, too many, in fact, like Mr. Crowley, are in the habit of leaving your nickles and dimes in that devil's den yonder. Cheat your enemy tonight. Give him the go-by, and let your worthy brother have the benefit of your self-denial."

"Now, boys, good night, and a merry Christmas to you and your households. Don't forget the blessed Christ. Carry him in your hearts to your homes. You will each receive the company's gift of a Christmas turkey, when you are paid off. I shall expect every man of you to be on hand next Tuesday morning."

The blackened roof of the spacious foundry rang with applause when Superintendent Lewis ended. Three rousing cheers went up for "The Randolph Machine Company;" then, three more for "Our Superintendent."

Mr. Lewis removed his hat, bowed to the men, and withdrew. Those lusty cheers sent a thrill of delight through his soul.

Superintendent Lewis showed his Christianity by the interest he took in the moral welfare of his men. He made it his business to know their habits, and their conditions, and

lost no opportunity to point a moral, or impress a duty, in their presence, when it offered.

He believed that there was a right way of mixing religion with business. It was nothing out of course for him to allude to "the Blessed Christ," when it could be done wisely. While he never made personal appeals to his men concerning religious duty, he often found occasion to throw out remarks which suggested, and often inspired, religious thought.

That night his men went to their homes morally toned up, and very few passed through the doors of those veritable devil's dens—the liquor saloons.

About five o'clock that evening Isaac Roberts carried to James Bolton the handsome sum of one hundred and eighty-seven dollars, one-half of which was the gift of his fellow-workmen. Neither did Mr. Bolton fail to receive the company's Christmas turkey.

There was "An Unexpected Christmas," at the Bolton's on the following Monday, which had its first inciting cause in the heart of Jennie's bosom friend.

The thoughtfulness of Maude Lewis brought forth a rich harvest of Christmas joy. It quickened influences and started secondary causes, which moved the hearts of more than a hundred strong men with benevolent emotions. Who knows all the blessed issues of good thoughts and right feelings? Human hearts are God's working tools, if only the divine hand gets hold of them.

An unexpected blessing is likely to be a superlative blessing. It was so in James Bolton's home. His own heart was enlarged in gratitude to God, in love for his toiling brothers, and in holy ambition to serve them.

Other consequences followed. On the first Sunday of the New Year, when Jennie Bolton stood before the communion table, with her pale-faced father, she had on a new hat, and a fashionable cloak, and her face was unusually joyous and attractive.

Perhaps, in the congregation, no one felt more the power of its attractions, than Judge Edmunds' son, Harry, who was there to witness Jennie's reception to the church.

Harry Edmunds observed also that Jennie held lovingly in her hand, a beautiful copy of an Oxford teacher's Bible, with flexible morocco covers. It was his own Christmas gift to the young lady he most admired.

There were certain other tokens of the leadings of Providence discernible, which fosters the pleasing hope, that if Harry Edmunds ever becomes a minister of the gospel, then Jennie Bolton will find a wide field of usefulness.

CHRISTMAS REFORM

A SERMON IN A STORY

CHRISTMAS REFORM.

A SERMON IN A STORY.

I.

Mr. John Baldwin was favorably known in the community where he dwelt. Although not a gentleman of much literary attainment, yet he possessed an inexhaustible fund of good humor and much genuine good sense, which fully compensated for his lack of intellectual culture.

Mr. Baldwin had been for many years a widower, and had not even thought of marrying again until his fascinating niece, whom he had brought up in his home, was married to Squire Davenport's only son, George; then Mr. Baldwin, in his loneliness, fastened his eyes, and subsequently his affections, upon the village schoolmistress, who having been a teacher of youth for twenty years, was very willing to undertake the task of ministering to the domestic happiness, and of improving the intellect of the only man who had ever asked her to share the comforts of his home.

To all appearances, John Baldwin was perfectly satisfied with his second wife. She was a woman of strong mind, if positive opinions and statements are an evidence of that quality of intellect. It was noticeable that Mr. Baldwin never opposed his wife in argument, nor dissented from her conclusions. Some regarded this as submission to fate, but a few of his personal friends looked upon it as a prudent display of tact.

Mr. Baldwin was noted for the serenity and equanimity of his disposition. He was never known to be ruffled. When inwardly disturbed, he was outwardly placid. When

most displeased, he invariably indulged in laughter, and when decidely dejected he would sing his merriest ballads.

One evening, about the middle of December, Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin were alone in their cosy sitting-room. The easiest chair was occupied by the rather spare, yet shapely form, of Mrs. Baldwin, while her husband was apparently just as comfortable in an uncushioned chair, on the back legs of which he was rocking his portly figure to and fro, with his hands clasped behind his head, as if keeping time with the darning needle, which, with mechanical precision, Mrs. Baldwin was driving back and forth through the heel of her husband's stocking.

"John, dear, please don't rock that way; it's an ungraceful, not to say, undignified, attitude for a gentleman of your age," said Mrs. Baldwin, pleadingly.

"I lay no claim to the title, Emily, for I was never trained to be a gentleman," her husband replied, and his chair came gently down on all fours, and so remained for the rest of the evening.

"You are hard on your soles, John," said Mrs. Baldwin, exhibiting a hole in the heel of his sock as big as a silver dollar.

"A man of my weight can't help that, Emily, but I am glad I'm not hard on the souls of other people," he answered. "Say, Emily," he continued, "you are real handy with your needle, aren't you?"

"Only in the practical way, John. I never was expert in the art of ornamental needle work."

"Ornamentality isn't of much account, anyway, Emily."

"Why, John! There's no such word in the dictionary as ornamentality."

"Then there's one word that's left out. Can't a man make a word for his own use now and then? Any law agin that, Emily?"

"Yes, John, the law of usage and correct speech. I hope you won't use that word at George Davenport's on Christmas Day. It would mortify me."

"As I don't want you to mortify before those high flying Davenports, I'll take care and talk out of Webster's Unabridged," said Mr. Baldwin, laughing. It was a laugh, however, that Mrs. Baldwin did not know how to interpret, —a laugh that expressed no amusement, but uttered, in its way, a personal opinion.

"Christmas is almost here. I wonder that Laura has not sent out her invitations."

"Perhaps she has," remarked her husband.

"We have not received ours."

"Perhaps we won't have any."

"Not have an invitation to Laura Davenport's Christmas party! Do you imagine, John, she would slight the only relatives she has in town?"

"Laura would want us, of course, but you know there are so many of them big-bugs—and—"

"John Baldwin, your language is just excruciating. I abominate slang."

"Who's been a-slinging any slang?"

"It's very bad taste, John, to call persons 'big-bugs', whether they are rich or poor."

"Didn't you get my idea? Howsomeever I s'pose 'taint elegant to speak in that natural sort of a way. I see big and little bugs a-crawling on the ground, and I see big and little bugs of men a-walking the earth. Speaking of slang, Emily, it appears to me there's a way of correct talking that's more excruciating to one's feeling than slang."

"John Baldwin, your language is just excruciating."

Mrs. Baldwin felt the sharp point of her husband's mild retort, and replied in gentle voice,

"I'm not finding any fault with you, John, only with your words. I do so wish you had enjoyed my advantages."

"Perhaps they would not have been advantages to me, Emily."

"Yes, they would, John. With my intellectual training, and your natural grace and art of pleasing people, you would shine in society. Aside from your want of education you are the most perfect man I ever knew."

"Thank you, Emily, for that fine compliment. But if education had spoilt my natural gifts, it would have made me more imperfect than I am. I should be fenced in by 'the law of usage,' as you call it, and should lose the freedom of speaking so promiscuriously."

"And, John, if you possessed a cultivated mind you could neither use words so curiously, nor as promiscuously."

"Well, wife, I am satisfied to have the better half of the home cultivated. I have observed that some houses are painted in front, and the back side is left for the sun and rain to blacken. That's me, Emily. Nature has educated me. But I'm glad to have the artificial color on the front. I am satisfied to have an educated wife as knows how to snap me up sudden and proper when I stumble over jaw-breakers. It may jar a fellow's feelings a little, but—'it's all for my good,' as the chap said who came too after he was hauled out of the sea, to find them a-rolling him on the rocky beach. But, Emily, what shall we get for Laura and the children for Christmas? I wouldn't miss the pleasure of making Laura's children a present for fifty dollars."

"Let me have time to think the matter over, John. I'll tell you tomorrow; but I heard you say that you were not over-run with money this season."

"What I said was, that bank-bills were not crawling all over me and settling content like, down in my pockets, but

I guess I can find something for Christmas. Should be sad if I couldn't."

"I heartily wish Christmas was passed. They make such a parade over it now-a-days. There will be a pompous dinner, with its tiresome courses and its nonsensical twaddle at the Davenports. It is strange how people will talk and laugh about nothing. For my part, give me simplicity in the feast and sound sense in the conversation. It's nigh all fashion, pride, and folly, this Christmas business."

"The young ones have a good time out of it. Christmas-tide brings joys," was Mr. Baldwin's mild demurrer. It was as near an argument as he ever ventured to make.

"More sorrows than joys is my way of thinking, John. It grows worse year by year. People lose their heads, and then their money. It is ruthless, wicked extravagance, the way people, poor as well as rich, spend their money for gew-gaws. The money needed for the necessities of life, for rent, food, and fuel, is put into useless gifts. I do wish some one would start a reform in Christmas usages. There certainly is great need of reformation in the Christian customs of our day."

II.

At an elegant writing-desk, in a room fashionably furnished, sat Mrs. George Davenport, with her pen in hand. Dipping it into her unique bronze ink-stand, she glanced at her husband, in his easy chair, and asked:

"What is the day of the month, George?"

"The fifteenth," he replied, without lifting his eyes from his evening paper.

"Oh, dear! Here it is the middle of December, and my invitations not yet written," exclaimed the lady in a dispairing voice.

"How many guests are to be invited?" asked her husband.

"There are ten, at least, of your relatives, and there are Uncle John and Aunt Emily. There will be no room for the children at the table if they all come."

"You may depend on the presence of every blessed one of them. Few people will stay at home to prepare a Christmas dinner when they have opportunity to partake of one prepared by some one else."

"I should be sorry to think that the dinner would be the only attraction to our Christmas festivities."

"Probably that is not the chief thing that will draw them. I have good reason to believe that the personal attractions of the hostess will exert a great influence," her husband answered.

"I have no reason to think that your genteel relatives like me extremely well, George."

"Like you? They can't help liking you!"

"But you know, George, that I am not fashionable, and I never can assume genteel airs."

"If you could, Laura, they would envy you, and I should not admire you as I do now. But how many can be comfortably seated at our dining-room table?"

"Twelve."

"Then limit your guests to ten, and give the children their place at the table."

"Very well, Uncle John and his wife must, then, be left out."

"Yes, drop them, not that I have the least objection, however, to your Uncle John."

"I know, George, it is Aunt Emily who is the object of your aversion."

"That is rather a strong word to express my feelings, Laura."

"What word would better express them?"

"I do not wish to analyze or define my emotions toward the lady in question. I entertain a certain qualified respect for your Aunt Emily, but I must confess she has never won my affections."

"You do not like strong minded women. Aunt Emily is too intellectual and argumentative to please you."

"Not too intellectual, but too positive in the expression of her opinions."

"I remember how she nettled you last Christmas when she got the best of the argument with you on the woman question."

"Indeed! Really, there wasn't any reasoning in her talk, only positive assertions, expressed with dogmatic emphasis. I was disturbed, but she did not know it."

"I knew it, George. Your smiling attention and polite manner could not hide from me your discomfiture, but I had supposed you had long ago recovered from the shock to your delicate nerves occasioned by Aunt Emily's declamation in behalf of wrong and defenseless women."

"Let us dismiss this disagreeable subject. You know that Aunt Emily's power of argumentation has nothing whatever to do with her exclusion from our list of guests. There is no room for her."

"Really, George, I don't know how I shall explain the matter to her. I am afraid she will not understand it, or rather, I am afraid she will."

"No explanation is required."

"But I dislike to make feeling in the family."

"Why should there be any feelings? Yet, after all, a woman who holds unreasonable opinions will quite likely indulge in unreasonable feelings."

"Oh, dear me!" sighed Mrs. Davenport; "Christmas brings cares and troubles."

"Don't worry, Laura; it will all come out right. I'll make Uncle John and his wife a handsome present, and you may choose the article."

"I shall be delighted to do so. You have removed one of my burdens already."

"Pray, what other burdens are there to bear? Perhaps I can remove them all."

"I am afraid the task is too difficult," she answered. There are so many cares and perplexities connected with the customary observance of Christmas."

"Give me an inventory of all your Christmas cares."

"First, then, there is the care of deciding just what you want to give to not less than a score of persons who, you have reasons to expect, will remember us. Then there is the care of finding the things you want. Then the care of providing and serving a dinner, with the formalities and proprieties of the occasion. Something, too, must be arranged for the diversion of the guests in the evening. Especially is this needful, as there can be expected no discussion between you

and dear Aunt Emily," and as she said this, Mrs. Davenport glanced archly at her husband.

"Is that all the cares?" asked Mr. Davenport, laughing heartily at his wife's sally.

"No, husband, that is far from being all my burdens. There are innumerable little vexatious cares involved. But my greatest anxiety arises from my unfitness to entertain aristocratic people. I shall never acquire the arts and etiquette of genteel society."

"Fiddle-de-dee! What do you suppose I care about these senseless formalities and mannerisms of society. Your manners are natural and pleasing. Only act yourself, and don't bother about etiquette."

"You are a blessed comforter, George, if only I please you I will be satisfied."

"Now, Laura, as to this hydra-head monster Christmas, will you answer for me one question frankly? Are not the pleasures and profits of Christmas observance a sufficient compensation for all its cares?"

"My dear husband, I am very doubtful about it. Good and evil seem to be so confusingly mixed in the whole matter that it is difficult to give a positive answer to your question."

"It is, then, a debatable question, in your opinion?"

"It certainly is."

"Wife, let us consider the question I have raised. Do Christmas cares pay for themselves in resultant Christmas joys? Now, you began the discussion; you give your reasons for Christmas reform, and I will weigh your arguments in the scales of my critical judgment."

"But, George, you don't like to hear a woman argue."

"Yes, I do, when it is a woman who can."

"Well, as my good husband is to be my judge, I will try."

III.

The ink had dried on Mrs. Davenport's pen. Laying it down, she drew her willow-rocker before the open fire, and by the side of her husband, and proceeded.

"I have long felt a secret dissatisfaction with our Christmas usages. The modern methods of observing the day of our Lord's nativity are not such as honor the spirit of the great occasion, nor are the joys we give and receive any sufficient compensation for the expense and the trouble."

"In a great measure, we have lost sight of the significance of the day, and have appropriated it to our own personal enjoyment, not to say selfish indulgence. My conviction is, that the world-spirit of self-love rules the observances of this sacred season more than the Christ-spirit of holy charity. Christmas ought to be what it has become, the world's greatest holiday, but with Christian people, at least, all its observances should be commemorative of the fact and the spirit of the Lord's advent. In its celebration, spiritual joy should find expression in charitable gifts. God's highest gift to man, the gift of his love made possible and real to us in Christ's coming to earth, should be symbolized by our purest and holiest gifts to others, especially to the suffering and needy."

"The expression of natural affection is not sufficient to compass this end. Christian love alone is adequate. Our Christmas gifts have no significance appropriate to the day, unless they are given in Christ's name. This is well known in theory, but it is sadly overlooked in practice. A gift to a dearly loved relative may express both natural affection and Christian love. To be a true Christmas gift, it must be given with the desire and intent to honor the Babe of

Bethlehem. Charitable gifts to the poor and needy are peculiarly appropriate, for we can give with that spirit of Christian benevolence which neither expects nor hopes for any return. And such gifts should be without ostentation."

"We surely are right in making Christmas a children's festival, and in using it to enforce the duty of Christian love. It should, therefore, be a high, church day, with public service to commemorate the Saviour's birth, and to impress the spirit of the child Jesus upon the hearts of children. The bells which ring for God and truth on Sundays ought to peal forth their gladdest notes on Christmas Day. More reason is there, infinitely more, for ringing the church bells on the day that commemorates the birth of Jesus than on any other natal day."

"We are entirely right also in making Christmas a time for home and family festivity. Merriment is in perfect accord with the jubilation of the angels who sang in Bethlehem. Christmas trees and the feast of good things are not to be interdicted, but all observance should be shaped to one end, and controlled by one aim, viz., the happy and holy remembrance of our Lord's nativity. Behold, how the world of traffic, fashion, pride and pleasure has encroached upon this sacred season, and made it subserve its own unhallowed ends, by ministering to avarice, indulgence, and selfishness. Think how we observe the day. We provide sumptuous feasts for ourselves. Our family dinners are usually elaborate, costly, and self-pleasing displays, often involving much wasteful extravagance. That which ought to be a Christian love-feast, we turn into a banquet of self-indulgence. We entertain and feast those who, in turn, entertain and feast us, in violation of our Lord's precept: 'When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, or thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made unto

thee; but thou, when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blest, for they cannot recompense thee.'"

"Hold on, right there, my fair preacher," exclaimed Mr. Davenport, "and excuse the interruption of your excellent homily. Allow me to ask if you offer that passage as a text for your sermon. Can it be applied to family Christmas dinners?"

"It surely contains a principle and a motive which ought to find application both to Christmas dinners, and Christmas donors. The poor should be feasted on Christ's natal day, 'For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good.' It is a solemn word of Christ to be recalled at Christmastide. How can we better bring sweet and costly ointment to anoint our Lord's head than by ministering to the poor and weak ones on Christmas Day. Let the poor have our remembrance, our love, our benevolent sympathy and help on Christmas. Let us remember them in our preparations for its observance. Let us plan and design, for the love of our Lord, to do good to those who are in need, and so let the wretched, the forlorn, the outcasts learn of the blessed mercy and pity of Christ through our wise and holy charity. Let them know, assuredly, that there is a Christ living and reigning in the hearts of His people. So let us make our "Merry Christmas" a twice blessed Christmas—to bless 'him that gives and him that takes.'"

Mrs. Davenport paused, constrained by her own emotion. She had spoken with her natural animation, intensified by her deep convictions, and she perceived that her words had moved her husband.

"Laura, dear," said he, "that was a fine sermon, the best I ever heard on the subject. You are surely right, but have

you not overlooked the fact that Christmas time is pre-eminently a time of special ministration to the poor."

"No, my husband. It would be a strange, sad fact, were it not so. I suppose all Christians minister to their unfortunate relatives and friends at the Christmas season, but the question is, do we love our neighbors as ourselves? Are we not content to bestow a moiety of our substance upon the poor, while we provide a super-abundance for ourselves? Dives did not deny his crumbs to Lazarus. Did Dives do his duty? Was he not clothed in a purple and fine linen, while Lazarus lay at his gate a pitiable object of charity? Admitting that this is an extreme illustration, yet it is not without its application to our time and our ways of living, and of treating the poor. What proportion do our offerings to the poor bear to the expense of our luxuries? Do our Christian self-denials equal our worldly self-indulgences? That we give our kindred and well-conditioned friends we give to ourselves, our selfish selves. We know we shall receive as much again. I am not saying they are mercenary gifts, not at all, but that, as gifts, they are wanting in the spirit and beauty of divine charity, of Christly compassion."

"Oh, wonderful preacher! If it were not that I should lose you from my home, I would dedicate you to the pulpit. But let me ask: Do you expect the time to come, ever, in this wicked world, when Christian charity will equal Christian self-indulgence?"

"Why not expect it and hope and pray for it? Has God lifted the standard too high? Is there not a sufficiency of grace and power to help us attain what otherwise would be impossible?"

"Laura, you have sounded the clear, silver note of reform in Christmas observance. All that is now wanting is to play the tune of reformation to the end. If some brave spirit would do this, it might, in time, become a popular

melody. Where think you, my wife, is the Christian family to be found to give to your doctrine a practical exemplification?"

"I am sure, George, I do not know. Do you?"

"Yes."

"Indeed! I am eager to know the name and social standing of that family in our community."

"It is a family reputed to be quite wealthy, aristocratic. and to possess some social prominence in the city."

"Just the family!" exclaimed Mrs. Davenport, "and the name?"

"It is the family of George Davenport," said he slowly, looking into the eyes of his wife.

"O—h, George! You astound me! It is quite impossible to begin such a social revolution in *our* home. Your fashionable relatives would think us fit subjects for the insane asylum."

"Possibly. But I am serious. All that is needful is for my sweet tongued preacher to become a stout-hearted reformer. I should deeply regret to find that she does not possess the courage of her convictions." And, as was his custom when deeply moved, he rose and walked nervously up and down the room.

"But George, Christmas is right upon us. Our plans are made. I am already involved in social obligations," she remonstrated.

"Laura, all reforms have to be suddenly inaugurated. Some one decides to do something."

"But, really, husband, it is too late to begin this season."

"Not at all. You have not written your invitations. Make new plans. Prepare a plain, wholesome dinner. Avoid superfluities and luxuries. Dispense with all gift-making beyond the limits of our immediate household. Use

the money saved in this way in distinctively charitable gifts. There's an outline, in brief, of my plan."

"How about the proposed present to Uncle John and Aunt Emily?"

"Dispense with that also, and invite them with the others. Your Aunt Emily is such an advocate for simplicity in living she will approve of your reform."

"But how embarrassing it will be to receive fine presents from those to whom we shall offer none!"

"Well, wife, reforms have their price, and reformers must suffer."

"Husband, I am afraid I am not heroic enough to be a reformer. I wish the pulpit would speak—"

"That would be useless. Pulpit preaching has never moved me on this subject. George Davenport needs no more doctrine. Now, let us do our duty, preacher and hearer working together."

"My dear husband, with all my heart and strength I will help you carry out your plan. Would it not be well to intimate to our invited guests that we intend to forego the pleasure of making presents or gifts, save in the way of benevolence?"

"No, that would have a trumpet sound. Reformers must not set themselves up as reformers. We will simply act in accordance with our convictions and suffer all consequences."

"My dear George, how much wiser you are than I!"

The next day Mrs. Davenport penned her notes of invitation to her contemplated guests, and the last one she wrote was addressed to Mr. and Mrs. John Baldwin.

IV.

CONCLUDED.

Mr. Davenport had resolved to act in the matter of Christmas reform. As he reflected upon the subject of that long conversation with his wife, his conviction was deepened that they had formed a wise resolution. During the business hours of the day his thoughts would wander from the affairs of his counting-room to the coming Christmas gathering in his home; and when he returned to his family at the close of the day, he could talk of nothing else. Even the children began to get the impression that there was to be a new departure from the established customs of Christmas observance.

Their oldest child, the eight-year-old boy, Harold, was an inquisitive little fellow, and by persistency in his boyish questions he at length came to a partial comprehension of the proposed plans for Christmas, and one morning he was overheard giving his little sister Daisy some information about the matter.

"Do you know, Daisy, that we are going to have our Christmas tree on Christmas morning? I heard papa tell mama so. And we are going to have it all by ourselves, too. Nobody is to be invited."

"Won't Uncle John come?" asked Daisy.

"No; Uncle John is coming to dinner."

"But I want Uncle John to come. It won't be nice if he doesn't;" and the little girl ran at once to ask her mamma about the matter, and Harold followed.

Mrs. Davenport sat down and, taking Daisy in her lap, while Harold stood by, she told them that they were going

to have a family Christmas tree after breakfast, on Christmas morning, and that the servants were to be invited, and that it would be just after morning prayers. She then informed them that they might each have the privilege of inviting two poor children to their Christmas tree, and that if they wished they might hang presents on the tree for them.

"May I invite any two boys I please, mother?" asked Harold with animation.

"Yes, Harold, but they must be boys about your own age and the children of poor parents, who will not have a Christmas tree in their own homes."

"Why can't I invite Freddie Wendall and Harvey Lord? They are the boys I like best, mamma."

"But Harold, those boys have beautiful homes; their parents will give them nice Christmas gifts. Don't you think Jesus would be better pleased if you invited some boys who perhaps will have no presents at all on Christmas unless you give them some?"

"Mamma, can I buy the presents for them, and can I buy just what I want to?"

"You shall go with me to buy them, and I will consult you about what the gifts shall be."

"That will be fun, mother, and it will make the poor little chaps happy, won't it? I know who I will ask to come," and Harold jumped sidewise across the room as he spoke.

Little Daisy had not said a word during the conversation with Harold, but her face was all alive with interest, and while Harold was expressing his delight by a series of boyish antics, she looked up into her mamma's face and said,

"Mamma, I wish you'd let me ask those two little girls who came here begging for something to eat."

"Why do you want them to come, Daisy? They were very dirty and ragged children."

"'Cause I guess they won't have any Christmas tree. Mamma, couldn't you buy them some clean clothes, and their mamma could wash their hands and faces."

"Perhaps I could, Daisy. I'll think about it. Their father is a miserable drunkard, Daisy, and has been in the jail several times. He may be there now, for all I know," said her mother, thoughtfully.

Daisy had put a new idea into her mother's head. Why could not she find time to look up this family and see what could be done for the children? She knew where they lived, and that their father's name was Ross. Mrs. Davenport determined to take this matter in hand that very afternoon.

On the evening of that day, after her husband had laid down the evening paper, Mrs. Davenport acquainted him with the result of her conversation with Daisy.

She had found Mrs. Ross at the wash-tub, while her infant child was sleeping in a cradle. Her two little girls, Hattie and Susie, were at school. Her husband had just been released from the county jail, and was working on the streets, in the city's employ. He had promised to let liquor alone. Hattie and Susie Ross, the first six, and the other eight years old, were in need of everything in the shape of clothing,—dresses, shoes and undergarments. They also needed cloaks. It would take quite a sum of money to fix them up decently, and would also take that which was not less valuable to Mrs. Davenport, time and effort.

"Well, Laura," said Mr. Davenport, after hearing his wife's report, "you have made an excellent beginning. We must gratify Daisy and have those little Ross girls with us Christmas Day. We can do nothing better for our own little daughter, by way of instruction, than to help those poor children. But cannot you set some one to do the work of

providing the necessary articles for them? It will be too much care for you to undertake. Employ some practicaal woman to purchase the things for you."

"No, George, I will attend to it myself. I do not want to get free from all Christmas cares; and this care will pay for itself, I think."

"That is just my thought, Laura. Let me give you a bit of my experience to-day. I used to comfort myself with the reflection that my part of Christian service was to give money, and that some one else must give time and thought to its proper application. My time must be given to making money; it is too valuable to devote to personal effort in behalf of the needy. But these few days past I have been thinking differently about this matter. Service means something beyond the gift of money. It is harder for me to give time than money, Laura, and more difficult still to give personal effort, so I resolved to give that which costs me the most, and to-day I have been acting on that basis, and I must confess the result has been sufficiently surprising and humbling. Laura, I don't think I ever did so much real, practical Christian work in any day of my life, as I have done this day.

"This afternoon, as I was referring to an old ledger of the firm, I came across a long-forgotten name, which brought distinctly before my mind's eye an old familiar face, that of an aged man, a friend of my father's, and once a prosperous merchant in this city. When in Germany, I heard of this man's failure in business, the wreck of his fortune, and his consequent loss of health. The ledger shows that my father was in the habit of giving him annual aid in the guise of Christian gifts of money. The name of this old gentleman is David Wilbur. I hunted him up this afternoon, and found him a confirmed invalid and in distressing circumstances, quite impoverished and forsaken of

friends. and dependent upon the aid of the city. It is a dreadful alternation of fortune to overtake an honest man. Is it not a sad commentary upon our Christianity that an honorable man, once a public-spirited citizen, has been suffered by society to become a pauper? Why has not the benevolence of the church long ago reached and alleviated the sufferings of this unfortunate man? Rather, I may ask, why has not George Davenport, until this late day, thought of his father's old friend? I'll tell you why, Laura; because George Davenport has never before taken time to reflect upon his personal obligation to minister to the poor; because George Davenport has rested on the unchristian assumption that the multiplicity of organized channels of benevolence has relieved him from all responsibility, except to contribute money. One of Paul's precepts broke in with a new meaning upon my mind to-day, 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.' We must think of our own interests and needs, but we ought also to be concerned about the wants and welfare of others. May God help me to practice that precept more in future."

"How very like my own reflections, George!" exclaimed his wife; the very thoughts and feelings I have had to-day. It does seem as if the good Spirit is leading us in the same direction. Of course you have arranged for poor Mr. Wilbur's comfort?"

"I have, Laura, and I felt it a blessed privilege to do so, and the Lord has given me another opportunity to think upon the things of others. Do you not remember that pale-faced young accountant who was in my office some five years ago, a faithful, willing fellow? His name was Henry Rollins."

"I remember him well, and the dreadful cough he had one winter," she replied.

"Well, he was with us only about one year. His poor health led him to throw up his situation. I was very sorry at the time; sorry for him, but mostly, I fear, for myself, for he was an efficient bookkeeper. Well, Laura, he left our employ, and I forgot all about him. To-day his name came to me like a flash, and, making inquiry of our clerks, I learned that the poor fellow has been slowly declining in health ever since he left us. The directory gave me his address, and I called at his mother's house this afternoon. Henry is confined to his bed, and has not long to live. His mother has supported him and a younger sister all these years. His father died about the time he entered our office. His mother takes in sewing, and, thus far, she has been able, by constant industry, to keep her daughter in the High School, but the poor woman is sadly overworked, and has reached the end of her strength. She will certainly break down unless she has immediate relief. Already she has secured a position for her young daughter as a domestic, and the prospect of leaving her class is quite heart-breaking to the girl.

"But, Laura, she shall not leave school, and that forlorn and discouraged woman shall have relief from drudging toil."

"O, my dear husband, I am so glad that you have the means and the heart to help her," said Mrs. Davenport, as she wiped away her tears of pity. "Was Henry pleased to see you?"

"The sight of me, at first, surprised him greatly, and when he realized that I had sought him out in Christian kindness, it quite broke him up. 'Oh! Mr. Davenport,' he sobbed, 'I have so often wished you would come to see me.' Think of it, Laura, that I should have entirely forgotten him."

"We will do all in our power, George, to attain for our past thoughtlessness," replied his wife. "I must call upon Mrs. Rollins before Christmas Day."

"Just what I want you to do, Laura. Your precious sermon has already brought forth its blessed fruit in my conscience and heart."

"Husband, is not this a foretaste of true Christian joy?"

"I believe it is, Laura, and thank God that we are permitted to realize it together."

V.

At nine o'clock on Christmas morning, two little girls, hand in hand, timidly mounted the steps of the Davenport mansion and pulled the bell. Evidently they were expected, for when the servant opened the door, Harold and Daisy immediately greeted them with the usual Christmas salutation, and ushered them into the hall. Hardly were their cloaks and hats off, when once more the door bell rang cheerfully, and presently two boys were admitted, who received the same hearty welcome. Their names were Hiram and Harvey Morse, and their home was not far away, on one of the side streets. Their father was a truckman, in the employ of Mr. Davenport, and was a man in very humble circumstances. Their mother had died about two years before, and Mr. Morse's only housekeeper was his youngest daughter, about twenty years of age.

Hiram and Harvey were often taken for twins. There was only one year's difference in their ages. One was six, the age of Harold, and the other was seven. The lads were often Harold's playmates. They attended the same school. They seldom had any luxuries, for their father sometimes found it difficult to provide all the necessities for his household. There was an older son, who was connected with the Business College in the city.

As these children entered the splendid large parlor of the Davenport mansion, they appeared at first bewildered, and ill at ease, but Harold soon made them feel at home by his attention to their comfort, and when, a few minutes later, Mrs. Davenport entered, she found their tongues going all together.

They were all now conducted to the nursery, where was prepared a beautiful little Christmas tree. The shutters had been closed, and the room darkened, and the gas jets were brilliantly burning. At the top of the Christmas tree the following motto was suspended:

"Christmas—the Birthday of Jesus," and just beneath this motto were these words, displayed in smaller type, "The Children's Christmas Tree." The servants now came in, and Mr. Davenport, who had entered and greeted the children, spoke a few words to them. He told them why their Christmas tree was called "A Christmas Tree," and explained the meaning of Christmas gifts. He then asked all to bow their heads while he thanked God for the gifts of a divine Saviour, and asked the blessing of the Christ upon their Christmas tree.

"Now, dear children," he said, "Mrs. Davenport will take your presents from the tree." The scene that followed we will not attempt to describe, nor specify what the children received. Harold and Daisy had presents from their parents, from Uncle John and the servants, also from each other, and their guests were all kindly remembered. The little Ross girls went home, when the hour was ended, clasping to their bosom the beautiful dolls, all dressed for the street, which Daisy had hung on the tree for them. And as for the Morse boys, they went proudly down the street, drawing after them two handsome sleds, Harold's gift. Nor was this all they received, for each one had a package.

It was a great day for Daisy and Harold. It was a great deal to say, but, nevertheless, we believe it is true, that they got more pleasure out of their Christmas tree than did their guests. They discovered in the joy of their own hearts the truth of the Lord's saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and that was the lesson their parents wished them to learn from their Christmas.

At about five o'clock that afternoon, Mrs. Davenport's guests began to arrive. The dinner was served at six. It was a plain dinner, consisting of three courses. There was roast turkey; and this was followed by one kind of pudding, and two kinds of fruit. There was no pie, nor cake, nor confectionery, nor ices. No flowers adorned the table. But the dinner was a success. Its simplicity was its excellence. What was wanting in the variety of the viands was fully made up in the superior quality of the dishes served. The dining-table had been lengthened beyond its proper dimensions, and the children had their places; Daisy beside her great-uncle, John, and Harold on the left of his mother. Uncle John was never more mirth-provoking in his conversation. Mr. Davenport's fashionable relatives were often convulsed with laughter at his droll remarks, and proved to be the least ceremonious of the merry company. They even induced Mr. Baldwin to sing a ballad, and then insisted that he should sing another. For once, at least, Aunt Emily seemed thoroughly pleased with everybody and everything. She never even hinted at the subject of "Woman's Rights;" and, what was more surprising, she was not in an argumentative mood.

The guests lingered long at the table, and many were the pleasant things they said in the way of expressing their appreciation of that plain dinner. But the cream of that plain dinner,—it's moral dessert, so to speak,—was the conversation that followed.

Uncle John, questioning Daisy, had elicited some facts about the morning Christmas tree, and these revelations had to be supplemented by a statement of the affair from her father. This awakened general interest in the matter, and led the way to an explanation of the moral cause of that plain dinner, and, as a sequel to this, the disclosure of the motive for dispensing with gift-making. It was all Daisy's

fault, for she would tell Uncle John what presents she had made to the poor little Ross girls, and what a good time they all had that morning. But perhaps Uncle John was somewhat to blame, for he drew the child on until it was just absolutely necessary to explain matters. And the explanation did everybody good. It cleared up the mystery of that plain dinner, and accounted fully for the moral radiance of the whole occasion. But no one seemed to get as much satisfaction out of the explanation as did Aunt Emily.

"Mr. Davenport," said she, "John will bear witness that I have been longing for a Christmas reformer to appear, but I had no idea that we should find one in this house. It is just wonderful."

"I think, Mrs. Baldwin," remarked one of "the fashionable relatives," "that we have found a pair of reformers, but, as nearly as I can learn, your charming niece was the original mover."

"Yes, friends, it was Laura's sermon which she preached to me that has given an unusual character and joy to our Christmas festivity," said Mr. Davenport.

"If I preached reform," said his wife, smiling, "my husband practiced it. He is the real reformer."

"It is my opinion that we had better join the movement, and next year be prepared to extend the Christmas reform in our own households," said another one of those fashionable relatives, and this sentiment was endorsed by a murmur of applause. There was, indeed, a very remarkable unanimity among the guests, and when at last the company separated, it was with strong expressions of approval and satisfaction.

It was a notable dinner, and a delightful occasion. The true Christmas spirit presided over the festivities, and invaded the hearts of all the guests.

After the guests had departed, Mr. Davenport remarked to his wife that Aunt Emily was a very intelligent conversationalist, which remark gave Mrs. Davenport much comfort. And on their way home that night, Mrs. Baldwin found opportunity to compliment Uncle John on the felicity of his language during the conversation of the evening.

"Really, John, you are making remarkable progress under my instruction," she said.

"I hope, Emily, that I appreciate my privileges," was Uncle John's only reply.

There was a moment's silence, broken by a sudden exclamation from Mr. Baldwin.

"That was the jolliest Christmas dinner!"

"It was just heavenly, John," his wife added, totally unconscious of the infelicity of her comparison.

One thing only, needed to be added in the conclusion of the story. Mr. and Mrs. Davenport's Christmas reform was no spasm of emotion. The spirit of Christmas abode with them during the year, and when the next Christmas came, even their fashionable relatives adopted the principles of wise and thoughtful charity, which had produced such spiritual fruit and holy joy in the Davenport household.

Various Verses

SHEPHERDS OF BETHLEHEM.

Beneath those silent stars that shone
On Bethlehem's ancient field,
Shepherds, awaiting morning's dawn,
Watched, their sleeping flocks to shield.

As the hours passed those holy men
On heavenly themes conversed,
And prophesies of Bethlehem
They joyfully rehearsed.

They thought of Jesse's royal son,
Who, a thousand years before,
Beneath those very stars had sung
Jehovah's faithful care.

And they talked about the Coming One,
Their long-expected Messiah;
Until their throbbing hearts grew warm
With longing and desire.

The Day Spring from on high is near,
Those prophet-shepherds said;
Judah's bright star will soon appear,
On us its glory shed.

From Bethlehem shall He come forth,
Our blessed prophets say;
To rule in love o'er all the earth,
And righteous sceptre sway.

Through endless ages He shall reign
The glorious Prince of Peace;
From sin's hard yoke, and error's chain,
God's Israel release.

And, lo! On those prayerful men
There burst an heavenly flame,
As to the plain of Bethlehem
A radiant Angel came.

"Ho! Shepherds! Unto you I bring
Good tidings, this glad morn,"
The Angel said, "for Christ, your King,
In Bethlehem, is born."

In yonder town of David's birth,
The Celestial Child, you'll find,
Whom God hath sent to this sad earth,—
The Saviour of mankind.

Sweetest music now filled the air.
Its pure melodious strains
From heaven's high angelic choir,
Floated o'er Bethlehem's plains.

Oh! lovely song of God's good will!
Oh! blissful anthem of peace!
Its music makes our hearts to thrill,
Its melody shall never cease.

O'er the earth let this anthem swell,
The love-song of our God,
In every home the Christ-joy dwell;
For Christ this earth hath trod.

Let each clear high-sounding bell
Peal forth on Christmas morn;
Let every voice the glad news tell;
In Bethlehem Christ was born.

ANNIVERSARY HYMN.

I.

Our gracious God, we bring
Our joyful offering,
Of prayer and praise;
Thro' all these years now gone,
Thou hast this people borne,
In sunshine and through storm,
With faithful care.

II.

Not thro' a desert way
Wand'ring from Thee astray,
O blessed God!
But in a fruitful land,
Kept by Thy loving hand,
Loyal to Thy command,
Our feet have trod.

III.

For days of sacred rest,
Communions, sweetly blest,
With our dear Lord;
For aged saints gone home,
Their work for us well done,
Their heav'nly joys begun,
Be Thou adored.

IV.

For souls in Christ, new-born,
Fruit of the seed here sown,
Now garnered in;
For earnest, faithful youth,
Nourished by sacred truth,
And trained to work for Christ,
Our thanks we bring.

V.

Lord, be our Helper still;
Thy work, with holy will,
Help us pursue;
Ere this new year is dead,
And all its hopes are fled,
May many more be led,
Thy work to do.

VI.

From this glad festal hour,
Spirit of truth and power,
    In us reside:
May comfort, peace, and light,
With love of truth and right,
And wisdom's holy might,
    With us abide.

VII.

Then, Lord, this church will shine,
Glowing with love divine,
    For others' good;
O Thou, our Strength and Shield,
Make this fair harvest field,
In rich abundance yield,
    For brotherhood.

Sung at the 25th Anniversary of the St. Lawrence Church, February 19, 1883.

"MIRTH IS MEDICINE."

PROV. XVII. 22.

A merry heart can sweetly sing
When other hearts are sad;
And sunshine out of darkness bring
To make the mournful glad.

The music of a merry heart
Is medicine to cheer;
A hearty, ringing, joyous laugh
It does one good to hear.

The merry heart that doeth good
Is ever true and wise;
Beneath its sunny, cheerful mood,
There's love which never dies.

The merry man has trials keen,
As doth the doleful one,
And clouds as darkling roll between
His sunlight and the sun.

But when the sun is hid from sight,
He knows it's somewhere shining,
And trusting still that all is right,
He sings without repining.

There is indeed a time to weep,
When merriment is folly;
Yet often men sad vigils keep
When they had best be jolly.

Then let us sing our merry songs,
And laugh whene'er we can;
For mirthfulness this life prolongs,
And doeth good to man.

LUTHER.

Among the great and noble men,
  Who have not lived in vain,
The miner's son of Eisleben
  Has won enduring fame.

No honors came to him by birth,
  No rank nor golden store;
Luther, like Christ of Nazareth,
  Was bred among the poor.

With plaintive song, in early youth,
  He begged, as he had need;
While in his soul the love of truth
  Grew as an holy seed.

The truth no other dared to own,
  No other dared defend,
In Luther found a champion,
  A loyal, fearless friend.

Men saw this bold and earnest man
  Arrayed 'gainst Papal Rome;
Undaunted by the Vatican,
  He braved its wrath alone.

The deed he wrought in truth's pure name
  Filled the world with wonder;
It knew not whence the lightning came,
  With its voice of thunder.

That voice was God's, the truth His own;
  Rome's iron yoke was broken;
The words that shook the Papal throne
  Were by Luther spoken.

All honor to the lion heart;
  And to the sturdy hands
That nailed the truth at Wittenburg,
  And sent it through the lands.

MUSTERED OUT.

Mustered Out! Yet our comrades now,
By ceaseless love, and a deathless vow
Of fraternity.
Unseen, yet brought by memories' thrill
To all our hearts, as our comrades still
In fidelity.

Although mustered out, they may be near,
Who answered not to the Roll Call here:
Yes, near us to-day,
To cheer the old boys, who wore the blue,
And stood beside them, youthful and true,
In the battle's array.

It may not be a journey afar,
To reach the land where our comrades are,
In their peaceful rest.
And oft may they at our campfires be,
When their spirit-forms we fail to see
As our unseen guests.

The nation's banner they loved to cheer,
Guarding their dust for many a year,
Now, over them waves.
In camp and march and on battlefield,
They hailed that flag they never would yield,
Which honors their graves.

To those sacred graves we soon shall bear
Sweet emblems of love, bright blossoms rare,
On Memorial Day.
While now we abide, a broken band—
Comrades who have reached the better land,
Comrades marching that way.

Brothers, joined now in that army grand,
Which onward moves at the Lord's command
To be mustered out.
Loyal be to God, and self, and right,
And win life's battle, and end the fight
With the victor's shout.

Read at Post Bosworth Memorial Service, Jan. 5, 1908.

"PRESS TOWARD THE MARK."

PHIL. III. 14.

The things which are behind forget,
  Your sins and failings all:
'Tis waste of time to mourn and fret
  For things beyond recall.

Dwell not upon the guilty past,
  That cannot make you wise;
Look not behind but forward cast
  Your anxious, tearful eyes.

Though you have sadly gone astray,
  To God you may return;
Then change your mind, make no delay,
  O wand'rer hasten home.

Forsake your sins and Christ confess,
  The past He will forgive.
The mark of perfect righteousness,—
  For this high calling live.

The prize of an immortal life
  Calls for incessant care.
There's need of daily toil and strife,
  There's need of daily prayer.

Reach onward now for this great prize,
  Think of the things before;
Be hopeful, cheerful, trustful, wise,
  And strength divine implore.

Then in Christ at last you'll rise,
  Complete in His likeness;
And in His kingdom reach the prize,
  The crown of righteousness.

SUBMISSION.

God doeth all things well,
  He orders all aright;
The reason none may tell,
  'Tis often hid from sight.

However dark my road,
  However hard my lot,
I know that God is good,
  Aud crush rebellious thought.

His will is always just;
  His way is always wise;
What can I do but trust,
  And hush impatient cries.

In silence then I'll wait,
  And bear my bitter grief;
At length the light will break,
  And I shall find relief.

Sorrow and loss and pain,
  For Christ's sake meekly borne,
Will prove eternal gain.
  "Blessed are they that mourn."

Lectures

DICKENS AS A PREACHER

DICKENS AS A PREACHER.

Whether or not Charles Dickens ever occupied a Christian pulpit, I am not informed, nor do I know that he ever advocated distinctively Christian doctrines; yet I claim him as a preacher,—an author-preacher of a morally wholesome type, a novel-writing preacher, whose masterly works of fiction have been read by millions of his fellow-men, and will continue to be read by more millions who will be both entertained and elevated by their perusal.

Without design to disarm criticism, I may anticipate a thoughtful objection to the application of a sacred official title to this famous novelist. Someone may say, "Speak to us of Dickens, if you please, as a matchless story teller, a rare humorist, a master of pathos; exalt him as you may as a keen observer of men and manners; a competent student of human nature, whose sympathies were always with the humble, the oppressed and down-trodden classes, glorifying the family life of the poor and the virtues of the illiterate, and making both poverty and ignorance comfortable and respectable. Say all this of Dickens, present him to us as a wonderful creative genius, who has by his art transfigured lowly life and simple comforts and made the world of common humanity seem to his readers a more cheerful, happier and better world; but Charles Dickens as a preacher, forsooth! Keep that honored title within the limits of Biblical teaching and gospel proclamation."

Now, while I feel the force of this dissent, I am not willing to surrender the caption of this lecture. For more than fifty years Charles Dickens has been preaching to me, if not the gospel of the Divine Love, yet the gospel of human goodness, creating in my mind pleasant living pictures of

the blessedness of family affection, the sweetness of personal friendship, and the glory of that human sympathy which ministers to others' woes, bears others' burdens, and lightens the gloom of others' sad lives.

I have even thought of Charles Dickens as one called of God, by an inward behest to preach to humanity, and by the method of his own genius to be, in an intellectual and artistic sphere, a preacher of good morals to mankind.

Devout admirers of Dickens' works have been no little troubled over the entire absence from his writings of conventional religious phraseology. It is indeed difficult to restrain the feeling that this was, on the author's part, a designed omission. His clerical characters, and they are few, are mostly overdrawn caricatures, designed to hold up for public detestation a certain type of the English clergy, with which he came in contact, and for which he had a supreme contempt. All through his writings he reveals his intense hatred of cant, pretention and hypocrisy. So, also, he ridiculed, with merciless severity, certain impracticable methods of Christian philanthropy, but we can well afford to endure all this, and laugh with the profane over the humor of its delineation, when we discover, in the midst of it all, precious gems of Christian thought, shining with peculiar radiance in original and captivating literary forms.

Dickens never mocks at religion, nor gives us the impression that he is making capital out of religious sentiment. One of his recent biographers records that on the last days of his life, in probably the last letter that left his pen, he wrote to one who objected to some passage in Edwin Drood as irreverent:—"I have always in my writings striven to express reverence for the life and lessons of our Saviour, because I feel it."

But whatever may be true of his religious faith or character, we know that Charles Dickens aimed to benefit

humanity by the power of his pen. He endeavored to make men feel the glory of goodness, the divineness of charity, and the celestial beauty of unselfish devotion. In many of his greatest novels he was governed by a definite philanthropic purpose.

Writing to Foster, his friend and biographer, Dickens expressed "the yearning that was in him to leave his hand lastingly upon the time, with one tender touch for the mass of toiling people that nothing could obliterate." Not only upon his time, but upon all future times has Dickens done that. In Dombey & Son, I read, "Any Christian working kindly in its little sphere will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness." What an inspiring incentive is this sentiment to diligence in doing good! And here is another from the same source:—"Creatures of one common origin, owing our duty to the Father of one family and tending to one common end, to make the world better."

Herbert Spencer would call this "the altruistic feeling." We prefer to think of it as the manifestation of the Christ spirit in the heart of Charles Dickens. His sympathies, like those of our Lord, were always with the poor and neglected. For the great mass of toiling people Dickens labored with his prolific pen. He glorified the common lot and life of working people, and there, in humblest homes, amidst the hardest conditions of poverty, he created the noblest and sweetest of his characters.

The purity of his pages has been the praise of the greatest minds. While he did not shun to draw his materials from the slums of society, nor forbear to delineate the vilest in character, yet, as has been often said, he never was himself vile. In all my long and delightful acquaintance with his writings I have never yet come upon a passage, or an expression I would expunge. His works are singularly free even from the suggestion of defiling thoughts. In

a personal letter to Dickens, Washington Irving paid him this splendid tribute, referring to that "exquisite tact which enabled him to carry his readers through the veriest dens of vice and villainy without a breath to shock the ear or a stain to sully the robe of the most shrinking delicacy"; and further on he speaks of "the rare gift which enabled him to paint low life without being low, and to be comic without the least taint of vulgarity."

Of many contemporary popular and much read authors of fiction such praise may not be accorded. In Dickens' works evil never masquerades as good. It stands out in its own baseness.

On all social questions Dickens was the champion of the oppressed and the wronged. If not always right in his theories, he was always right at heart. In drift and purpose he was, as Mr. Ruskin has said, "entirely right," although Macaulay characterized his political philosophy as "sullen socialism". Marzails, referring to these high judgments, is led to add, "Yes, entirely right in feeling, right in sympathy with those who toil and suffer, right in desire to make their lives more human and beautiful, right in the belief that the same human heart beats below all class distinctions. But beyond this, a novelist only, not a philosopher, not fitted to grapple effectively with the complex social and political problems and to solve them to right conclusions."

Now, precisely because of this, because Dickens was not a philosopher, nor a statesman, but was an intellectual and literary genius, possessed of a powerful imagination, right feeling and strong sympathies with suffering humanity, was he a great popular, helpful and inspiring preacher. As a deep philosophic thinker, or as a statesman of broad and competent views of public policy, Dickens never would or could have been a preacher of humanity to humanity. Nor could he have written novels to be read by the millions.

Because he was a writer entirely right in feeling, purpose, aim, he has blessed the hearts, the homes and the lives of the toiling multitudes, investing such homes and hearts, invaded by the dark shadows of poverty, with a spirit of cheerfulness and brightness, and revealing and glorifying a fact, often overlooked, that such imperilled homes are not necessarily forsaken of all comfort and gladness, and finely illustrating the Christian truth that the sweetest joys of life are not in the gift of outward conditions, but of inward life.

As a preacher Dickens was intensely satirical, ironical and mirthful. These elements, so perilous in the pulpit, are powerful in the novel. In Dickens' writings satire and ridicule go hand in hand through whole chapters, and ironical exaggeration mingles with mirth in long and very notable passages, in which very likely the reader may be so carried away with the fun as to be quite unmindful of the aim and the lesson.

Dickens took supreme delight in the portrayal of the oddities, eccentricities and absurdities of human nature. His purpose was twofold, to ridicule folly and create gaiety. He justifies this duplex aim. He confessed that he wrote "with the weak idea that the English people were as hard worked as any people under the sun; for this reason," said he, "I would give them a little more play." "People mutht be amuthed" said the lisping Sheary to the hard-faced Gradgrind. "People mutht be amuthed thomehow; they can't alwayth be a working, nor yet can they alwayth be a learning." In Sheary's opinion we have Dickens' justification for writing so much good, mirth-provoking nonsense. But the nonsense has its higher aim. "Virtue has its own reward, so's jollity," remarked the cheerful Mark Tapley, the man who, under the most dismal and disheartening conditions was bound to bear up bravely and come out strong in cheerfulness. How sensibly Dickens preaches to his

readers in the character and sayings of this vivacious Mark Tapley, telling us that there is no credit in being jolly in fine weather and smooth sailing, but to maintain a cheerful aspect and preserve buoyancy of spirits under the stress of disappointment, or the pressure of calamity, is indeed an heroic achievement. Ah! there's the rub, "To put a cheerful courage on," as the old hymn exhorts, when the state of affairs might justify dolorous complaint. Is not this the right sort of preaching?

"I don't believe," wrote Dickens, "that harmless cheerfulness and good humor are thought greater sins in heaven than shirt collars are, and I do believe that those chaps are just about as sensible in putting down one as in leaving off the other." Steele held the same opinion. "Every time a man smiles," he says, "but much more so when he laughs, he adds something to this fragment of life." Who shall tell how much Dickens has added to the moral weight of humanity, according to this theory!

There is a Bible proverb which teaches that "Mirth is medicine and doeth good to man," which means that laughter is conducive to health. Dickens believed that, and wrote hundreds of pages of drollery, not for the mere fun of the writing, but for the sake of making mankind healthier and happier.

Taine speaks of Dickens as "the most railing, the most comic and the most jocose of authors, and it is, moreover, a singular gaiety,"—"a laughter akin to tears;" in it "satire is akin to elegy; if the second pleads for the oppressed, the first combats the oppressor." "Dickens avenges himself by ridicule." Mr. Taine tells us that "there are parts" in Dickens' writings "where the comic element is so violent that it has the semblance of vengeance, and cites the story of Jonas Chuzzlewit as an example. I will give you Taine's citation:—

"The very first word which this excellent boy began to spell was gain and the second (when he came into two syllables) was money. This fine education had unfortunately produced two results; first, that having long been taught by his father to overreach everybody, he had imperceptibly acquired a love of overreaching that venerable monitor himself; secondly, that being taught to regard everything as a matter of property, he had gradually come to look with impatience on his parent as a certain amount of real estate who would be very well secured in that particular description of a strong box which is commonly called a coffin, and banked in the grave."

"Is that my father snoring, Pecksniff?" asked Jonas. "Tread upon his foot, will you be so good? The foot next you is the gouty one." Here is grim humor, ironic ridicule, absurd satirism, and yet, it is certainly effective preaching, revealing the hideous development of soul destroying covetousness. "The comic element" is indeed "violent" and has in it "the spirit of vengeance".

The fact is, Dickens delighted to pulverize the villain, to pummel the hypocrite, and to take the conceit out of the self-consequential man, revealing the utter shallowness, emptiness and selfishness of pomposity. Hear this from *Hard Times:* "A man who has any reason to believe in himself never flourishes himself before the faces of other people." The man of real weight never needs to resort to pretentious display in order to impress his personality upon other people.

Take Dickens' portraiture of Mr. Bounderby in *Hard Times,* the bosom friend of Gradgrind, as an illustration of pomposity. He calls him the "bully of humanity" and thus described him: "A rich man, banker, merchant and manufacturer, with a great puffed head and forehead, having a prevailing appearance of being inflated as a balloon; a man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself; a man who was

always proclaiming himself through that brassy speaking trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance, his old poverty." "A self made man" was he, "born in a ditch, outcast of a wretched mother, and his great and marvelous success was self-achieved." But Dickens brings him down at last to his own low level, and all the falsehoods and shams of his pretensions are disclosed. With intense delight the author who created this detestable character, punches the inflated balloon and its utter collapse follows, to the satisfaction of every reader. There are many Bounderbys flourishing themselves before the faces of others and never realizing the disgust they create in the minds of all sensible people. To everyone who reads *Hard Times* the name of Bounderby will preach its moral:—"A man who has any reason to believe in himself never flourishes himself in the faces of other people."

Again, the name of Pecksniff preaches no less wisely and strongly against the pomposity of piety. In the language of the literary world, "Pecksniffian" means "high pretensions to benevolence and virtue in really selfish and hypocritical characters."

There is a forcible moral essay in that word, coined out of Dickens' portraiture of Pecksniff, yea, a breezy, healthful sermon. Read Martin Chuzzlewit and you will find that the sermon is not a dull, if it is a long one.

But let us never forget that there is a pomposity of words as well as of manners. The great orator Erskine once met a grandiloquent barnster who delighted in flowery language. He was telling Erskine how he had injured his ankle in climbing over a gate in his brother's grounds. "I had to cilmb over it," he said, "in doing which I came in contact with the uppermost bar, and have grazed the epidermis of my shin, attended with a slight extravasation of blood."

"You may thank your stars," replied Erskine, "that your brother's gate was not as lofty as your style, or you must have broken your neck."

Often pomposity in personality and in style of language go together as they did with Mr. Pecksniff. Even when by the heavy cane of the indignant, exasperated old man Chuzzlewit, this "smooth tongued hypocrite," this "crawling knave" was smitten to earth, his pomposity of speech did not desert him:—

"I have been struck this day," said Mr. Pecksniff, "with a walking stick (which I have every reason to believe has knobs upon it) on that delicate and exquisite human anatomy, the brain. Several blows have been inflicted, sir, without a walking stick, on that tender portion of my frame, my heart;" and addressing Mr. Chuzzlewit, who had knocked him down as he would a dangerous cur, and would have knocked him again when down if he had not been restrained by his friends,—addressing this heroic old man, he said, "If you ever contemplate the silent tomb, sir, which you will excuse me for entertaining some doubt of your doing, after the conduct into which you have been betrayed this day;—if you ever contemplate the silent tomb, sir, think of me. * * * * If you should ever wish to have anything inscribed upon your silent tomb, sir, let it be that I, ah! my remorseful sir! that I, the humble individual who has now the honor of reproaching you, forgave you."

Thus the master passion of this hardened hypocrite, this man of mock humility and pretentious piety revealed itself in the time of his humiliation and ruin. We laugh as we read, for the humor is irresistible; we are satisfied as we read, for the mask of hypocrisy is removed and the meanness of the man is exposed and punished; but we are also instructed as we read, for we are made more conscious of the hideousness of religious hypocrisy.

The humor of Dickens has its moral lessons; it is always didactic and instructive. Certain literary critics are pleased to say that it is unrefined and coarse humor. To which criticism I only reply, if it is true, then unrefined and coarse humor is the kind I like.

Speaking of the humor of Dickens brings to mind Sam Weller, in whom we find it not only at its best, but concentrated, amplified and intensified. To my mind Sam Weller is the most humorous, comical character in the world's fiction, and withal the most congruous and sensible. A recent writer records his opinion that "Sam Weller was an impersonation of Dickens himself, a sort of Dickens in a humble sphere of life." This opinion is in harmony with my own notion, for in the portraiture of Sam Weller, Dickens revels in evident self-satisfaction. Here, as a humorist, he reached his highest level, and we have an explanation of this in the well known fact that the introduction of Sam Weller into the tenth chapter saved the "Pickwick Papers" from being a financial failure. It was an exigency; more liveliness must be put into the story; Dickens must do his best, and the result was the inimitable, imperturbable, unsurpassable Sam Weller, one of the most thoroughly alive of all Dickens' 1700 or more characters, and as well, one of the most natural, a rare combination of grotesque humor and keen common sense. Justin McCarthy in his recent essay on Dickens affirms that in Sam Weller "we have a living character of such odd and various humor that even Dickens himself was not able to read up to the level of his own creation." A marvellous tribute this, paid by Dickens the impersonator to Dickens the author! The writer of rich and roaring humor surpassed himself as an interpreter of his own work.

And even in Sam Weller Dickens is preaching to his readers on many moral themes, on matrimony, for instance.

There is a vast deal of good preaching on this very important matter in Dickens' works, impenetrated with delicate humor.

The dying confession of Sam's mother-in-law, the second Mrs. Weller, comes to mind. Previous to her last sickness Sam met his father unexpectedly one day and inquired concerning Mrs. Weller's health.

"How's mother-in-law?" asked Sam. "Vy, Sammie, I tell you what," said Mr. Weller senior, "there never was a nicer voman, as a vidder, than that 'ere second venture o' mine, a sweet creter she was, Sammie, and all I can say on her now, Sammie, is that she was such an uncommon pleasant vidder, it's a great pity she ever changed her condition. She don't act as a vife, Sammie."

"Don't she, though?" inquired Sam.

The elder Mr. Weller shook his head with a sigh. "I've done it once too often, Sammie! I've done it once too often."

This is pathetically humorous; its satire touches much common experience. But after all, the elder Mr. Weller's reflection upon his irretrievable blunder is not so mournful as Mrs. Weller's last penitent words to her husband.

After the funeral Sam, like a dutiful son, goes home to see his father and finds the old gentleman sitting in weeds and puffing his pipe for comfort. He had on his hat from which streamed about a yard and a half of crape, and was gazing abstractedly into the fire-place, from which contemplative mood he was finally aroused by the shouts of his son.

"I've been calling to you half a dozen times," said Sam. hanging his hat on a peg, "and you didn't hear me."

"No, Sammie, I was in referee."

"What about?" inquired Sam, drawing a chair up to the fire.

"In referee, Sammie, about her. I was a thinking that upon the whole I was very sorry she was gone."

"Well, so you ought to be," replied Sam.

"Those were very sensible observations as she made, Sammie," said Mr. Weller.

"Wot observations?"

"Them as she made arter she was took ill," replied the old gentleman.

"Wot was they?"

"Something to this effect, Sammie. 'Veller,' she says, 'I have not done by you quite what I ought to have done. Veller, I might have made your home more comfortabler. I begin to see now when it is too late, that if a married 'ooman vishes to be religious, she should begin by discharging her duties at home."

This sad lament on her dying day would have been an excellent motto for Mrs. Weller's wedding day. Let us suppose that she had framed it and hung it in that cosy sitting room at the beginning of her married life, in that sitting room where she had so frequently entertained that canting, hypocritical parson, brewing Mr. Weller's punch and toasting Mr. Weller's bread for the Rev. Mr. Stiggins, while Mr. Weller senior was sitting apart by himself in another room, brooding upon his domestic infelicities. It might possibly have led Mrs. Weller to keep in mind that "home dooties" are quite as important a part of religion as chapel attendance. Without doubt, too, if such had been the case, Mr. Weller's second venture would have been far more successful. Piety displayed in pleasing a good-natured husband is quite as genuine as in serving a sanctimonious rector.

The moral lesson illustrated by Mrs. Weller's dying confession is very mournful and very practical and of quite general application. It is emphasized by a wise sentiment

from the Christmas Carol. "No space of regret can make amends for one's life opportunities misused;" and also by another from Oliver Twist, "There is no remorse so deep as that which is unavailing; let us remember this in time." "Life's opportunities misused!" "Unavailing remorse!" It is something, indeed, to mourn over if the opportunities to make the home happy have been misused. Husbands and fathers, as well as wives and mothers, should remember this in time. How many homes have been wrecked by neglect to remember that where the law of love and kindness ceases to rule the household life, the ruin of domestic happiness impends. What means it that such increasing demands upon our civil courts are made for relief from marital vows? This common wreckage of homes saps the foundation of national strength and honor.

Large families, parental fidelity, domestic happiness, moral and religious training for the children in the home life, these are the essential factors of our nation's strength, honor and greatness. The breaking down of the home as the heaven ordained means for the moral and religious education of the young is a direful prophecy of national calamity.

Not long ago I met this statement in my reading: "American home life, as a supreme factor in the moral training of children, is not as powerful as it once was," and the writer went on to say, "What is needed is a restoration of Puritan discipline with the Puritan theology left out."

Another writer, replying, said: "Not a restoration of Puritan discipline, but the restoration of Puritan parental responsibility." Both writers want the Puritan virtue, one its strong discipline in the home life, the other its high commanding sense of Christian responsibility. But how can they have either apart from the Puritan's faith in God, which was the vital source of the Puritan's virtues?

The deepest need of all is for the home-life truly Christianized, as the mightiest factor in the moral and religious life of the nation.

As a preacher of good morals Dickens was constantly commending straightforwardness in conduct. "If," he says, "you can't get to be uncommon through being straight, you'll never do it through being crooked." And again, "All good ends can be worked out by good means." And still again, "Nothing that is not true can possibly be good." These are fine samples of Dickens' way of putting the ethics of Christianity.

Captain Cuttle was one of Dickens' character preachers, always ready to "stand by" and ever anxious for you to overhaul your catechism to verify his oracular observations. To his bright, engaging "Nephy" Walter Gay he delivers this very scriptural sentiment:

"Hope, my lad, is a buoy, but like any other buoy, it can't be steered nowhere. * * * Along with the figurehead of hope there is an anchor, but what's the good of my having an anchor if I can't find no bottom to let it go in?"

Serious considerations these! Hope has no steering machinery. Hope alone never gets you anywhere. Hope is an anchor to the soul only when it has ground. The anchor has no propelling power. Faith is the ground of hope. Into this bottom the anchor of hope must sink deep its flukes. The anchored soul is then safe and strong. Hope thus anchored in a stout heart of faith begets energetic action and insures success.

This brings to mind that fine preacher to ambitious youth, John Jarndyce, the guardian of Richard Carstone:—

"Rick, the world is before you. As you enter it, so it will receive you. If you had the abilities of all the great men, past and present, you could do nothing without sincerely meaning it and setting about it. If you entertain the

supposition that any real success in great things or in small ever was, or ever will be, wrested from fortune by fits and starts, leave that wrong idea here. Trust in nothing but in Providence and your efforts. Never separate the two."

That is well put. Trust in God first, then in your own efforts. Not trust in God to supplement your own endeavors, but with a calm, continuous, growing trust in Divine Providence go to work and work out your earthly fortune as well as your eternal salvation. These are never to be separated. The largest possible faith in self and the wisest self-reliance spring from faith in God. Let us thank Charles Dickens for this little sermon, which we have extracted from Bleak House. Richard Carson and Ada Clare are distantly related wards in that ancient and interminable suit of Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce. They are young; he is manly; she is beautiful. They have very properly fallen in love with each other. Their prospects are bright only remotely and contingently. They are under the shadow of that long protracted and hopeless law-suit. Meanwhile they are dependent upon John Jarndyce, their wise and generous guardian, both for counsel and care. Richard is about to go away to begin the task of making his own fortune. John Jarndyce turns preacher. Into the mouth of the sagacious guardian of the lovers Dickens puts the terse and admirable homily I have quoted.

Another sage counsel from Mr. Jarndyce to Richard Carstone is well worth our attention. Referring to Ada Clare, he says, "Love her, Rick, in your active life, no less than in her home when you revisit it, and all will go well." The point of this preaching may not be seen at the hasty reading. There's no lack of love in the girl's home. The hours of courtship, how fast they speed on! When the lover comes from his toil into the girl's home, it is all sunshine and hope and bliss. Will he love her as well in his

active life? Will he be temperate, industrious, ambitious, enterprising, for her sake, that he may win for her a home over which she may preside, happier than a queen in her palace? Will he wait long for her, if need be, in true fidelity, and give to her what he expects to receive from her, a heart loyal and pure? All the wealth that Richard Carstone had to bestow upon his beautiful Ada was affection and devotion, and she could hope to offer him nothing richer than her own sweet self. "But suppose," said John Jarndyce to Richard, "a man can get a fortune in a wife, instead of with her, why then he is a lucky fellow."

There's a precious bit of sermonic wisdom in that sly saying of John Jarndyce, that honors the heart of our novelist-preacher. "A fortune in a wife!" Does not the inspired word tell us that the price of a good wife is "above rubies, and whoso findeth her, findeth a good thing?" Yea, par excellence, the very best earthly treasure that can be found, or the wide world can give to man.

It is simply impossible to show how great a preacher Dickens was, or how far reaching his influence has extended. "Readers of the present generation," writes Justin McCarthy, "will find it hard to understand how supreme and universal was the influence of Dickens during his lifetime. We have at present no such reigning monarch of fiction. Dickens was read by everyone, high and low, cultured and uncultured." "Thackery himself said," testifies Mr. McCarthy, "that the readers of his novels did not number one in seven of those who read Pickwick, Nicholas Nickleby and David Copperfield. In popularity Dickens stood without a rival."

We believe that in popularity and power as a novelist he is still without a peer.

In his familiar and admired child creations he is still preaching to the world of readers in behalf of forlorn and

woebegone children, and the wonderful pathos and sympathy of his delineation of child-life and child-sorrows were the reflections of his own sad and suffering childhood. There are critics who call these child-creations "pompous rhetoric," but rivers of human tears have been shed, and the world's sympathy and pity have been wonderfully quickened over this "pompous rhetoric" of the great champion of the world's wretched little outcasts. Yea, our better times of Christian philanthropy and charity have been in no small measure promoted by Dickens' pathetic and thrilling pen pictures of suffering childhood. Who can tell what has been wrought by his masterly portrayal of the child miseries of Oliver Twist and wretched Smike, little Joe and gentle Nell; of poor little Paul Dombey and tiny Tim, the creations not only of Dickens' wonderful genius, but of his compassionate heart!

Lawrence Hutton quotes an unknown writer as saying: "Dickens has softened the hearts of an whole generation; he made charity fashionable. Every barefooted boy and girl in the streets of England and America to-day fares a little better, gets fewer cuffs and more pudding, because Charles Dickens wrote those Christmas tales. He awakened pity in the hearts of sixty millions of people."

Thackery tells us of two ladies with whom he at different times had discussed the Christmas Carol, and how each had concluded by saying of the author, "God bless him!" So say we, God bless the memory of Charles Dickens.

"Dickens as a Preacher!" I hope I have justified the caption of this paper. I believe he will continue to preach to all lovers of good and wholesome literature in the ages to come.

I close my reading, as it is fitting I should do, with a choice bit of sermonic application from our literary preacher.

It comes to us from the lips of the sober, practical Betsy Trotwood, who thus exhorts:

"We are all drawing on to the bottom of the hill, whatever age we are, all on account of time's never standing still. So let us always do a kindness."

Let us lay this to heart. Life is a great opportunity, but it is a limited one. The final scene approaches. Let us so order our lives and our lips by the law of Love that when we reach the bottom of the hill, we shall feel how much better it is to accept the situation gracefully and gladly, and cross the river of death to the eternal shore beyond than, even were it possible, to reclimb the hill of mortality. "So let us always do a kindness."

THREE CONTEMPORARY PORTLAND PASTORS

THREE CONTEMPORARY PORTLAND PASTORS.

Fifty years ago, there were in Portland, three Congregational ministers, whose pastorates, each, continued for thirty years and who, for the period of eighteen years, were contemporary pastors. I refer to the Rev. Drs. William T. Dwight, John W. Chickering and John J. Carruthers.

Of these three eminent clergymen, Dr. Dwight was the earliest in the Portland field, becoming in 1832, the pastor of the third Congregational church, at the age of 39. It was his first and only pastorate and it continued for 32 years. Dr. Dwight was educated in Yale college, under the presidency of his eminent father, Dr. Timothy Dwight, where, for two years after his graduation he remained as a tutor. During those early years the foundations of Dr. Dwight's broad scholarship and intellectual power were laid. He first chose the profession of law, and studied, and practiced law in Philadelphia from 1819 to 1831. Had he pursued that profession as his life calling, there is every reason to believe he would have greatly distinguished himself as a jurist, and have placed his name high in the ranks of the statesmen of that period.

It was, however, otherwise ordered in the court of heaven. In 1831, during a religious awakening in Philadelphia, Mr. Dwight was the subject of a deep religious experience, and there came into the heart of this brilliant and promising lawyer, a conviction of duty to become a preacher of the gospel. He felt that he was called of God, and he was not disobedient to that inward heavenly voice, but immediately consecrated himself to the work of the ministry, giving up all his bright prospects of fame and fortune.

At this time the Third Church of Portland was bereaved of its beloved and successful minister, the Rev. Charles Jenkins, and was led to extend to Mr. Dwight a call to its pastorate. The year of his conversion had witnessed his licensure as a preacher, and in the following year, 1832, he was ordained by council in Portland. His reputation as a pulpit orator began with his first sermons in the Third Church.

The older people of Portland speak of him as the most eloquent preacher the city has had since Dr. Payson's time.

Dr. Dwight was pre-eminently a preacher. Nature had equipped him for the orator's art and power with a vigorous intellect, a strong logical faculty, a melodious voice and a charming personality. He possessed the natural elements of impressive oratory. It was in the pulpit and on the platform that he exercised his greatest power over the minds and hearts of men.

There was a certain statesmanlike quality, both in substance of his discourse and the dignity of his manner, which were due, in part, doubtless, to his commanding presence, but more, perhaps, to his legal knowledge and training.

While Dr. Dwight was never deserving of the charge of "preaching politics," he was positive and fearless in the utterance of his opinions and views concerning the politico-moral problems of his time.

In 1835, three years after the beginning of Dr. Dwight's ministry in Portland, the Rev. John W. Chickering, of Bolton, Mass., came to the pastorate of the High Street Church. He was then a young man of twenty-seven, with a five years' successful pastorate behind him. High Street Church was four years old, the second child of the Second Parish. The young church grew rapidly in its membership, and the young pastor in its popularity. At the end of the first decade of Mr. Chickering's ministry, the church, which

began its existence in 1831 with sixty-five members, reported a membership of 341.

During his entire ministry of thirty years Dr. Chickering received to the High Street Church, 780 persons, 480 of them on confession of their faith. This gave him the well earned reputation of being the most successful pastor in Maine.

Under Dr. Chickering's energetic leadership State Street Church was colonized, High Street Church giving up forty-eight of her influential members to form that organization in 1852. It was a magnanimous sacrifice, and High Street has its rich reward in the high honor of having given birth to the, financially, strongest and most influential Congregational Church in Maine.

In this important movement Dr. Chickering was prominent in energy and effort. Later, in 1858 and 1859, Dr. Chickering was the councillor and helper of the founders of the St. Lawrence Congregational Church at the eastern end of the city, and later still, in 1862, the West Congregational Church edifice was erected through his personal effort. The fund of $3,000, entrusted to his care by a lady member of High Street congregation, was increased by his efforts to $9,000. These facts bear witness to the energy and activity of this great High Street pastor.

Dr. Chickering was an influential leader in the cause of Congregationalism in Maine, and prominent throughout his ministry in the work of our State Conference. For seven years, from 1842-1849, he was its treasurer. From 1845 to 1850, its corresponding secretary; and for three consecutive years, from 1858-1860, its moderator. In 1861 he preached the Conference sermon at Brunswick. He was also a trustee of the Maine Missionary Society, and preached the annual sermon before that body in 1852.

In 1855 Bowdoin conferred upon him the well-merited degree of Doctor of Divinity.

And, at the close of his long and laborious ministry, the High Street Church and Parish gave him a noble testimony of their affection and gratitude, in the form of financial securities to the amount of ten thousand dollars.

Dr. Chickering died while on his way to his home in Washington, at Brooklyn, December 9, 1888, at the age of eighty years.

When the Rev. John Johnston Carruthers came to the pastorate of the Second Parish Church, Dr. Dwight had been for thirteen, and Dr. Chickering for eleven years, ministers in Portland. The Second Parish had reached the acme of its strength, and needed a strong and able minister. Dr. Carruthers, having had a large and diversified experience in missionary, ministerial and educational work, proved himself quite equal to the emergency.

Born in Scotland, in the year 1800, in the township which gave birth to Thomas Carlyle, who was his schoolmate in boyhood; living in the home of his maternal grandfather, the Rev. John Johnston, whom Carlyle called "the priestliest man he ever, under ecclesiastical guise, was privileged to look upon." John Johnston Carruthers was at the age of thirteen, a pupil in the University of St. Andrews, where he spent two years, completing his college course in the University of Edinburg. In 1818 he was pursuing theological studies under Dr. Dawson. In 1819 he was married, and ordained as a missionary to Russian Tartary, and three months later he and his wife were en route to the Crimea, where he spent five or six years in laborious missionary labor. In 1825 Alexander II of Russia died, and missionaries were compelled to withdraw from the country.

The year 1827 found this missionary settled over the parish of Gosport, England, and filling the chair of theology,

at the same time, in its college. In 1832 he was the minister of a church in Liverpool. After eight years' experience in that city, as a preacher, he came in 1841 to Montreal, and until his call to Portland in 1846 was occupied there in parochial and professional work, filling the chair of logic and rhetoric in McGill College.

With this ample equipment and varied experience Dr. Carruthers entered upon his Portland ministry. A strong man, whose sturdiness of physique was matched by his inward astuteness.

He came a foreigner to our shores and was speedily Americanized. The country he adopted he loved and served. A pleasant anecdote is told of his witty reply to one who, in his presence, was exalting the native above the adopted citizen. "I am an American by choice," he said. "You, probably by the necessity of the case. There may be some virtue in volition; there can be none in accident."

During the Civil War the patriotic addresses of Dr. Carruthers in pulpit and on platform won for him high distinction. He proved also, how thoroughly he was identified with the cause of the Union by his foreign correspondence, keeping himself constantly in touch with the British press.

In the years of struggle and self-sacrifice following the great fire of 1866, which swept away nearly one-third of the city, and many of its churches, the Second Parish among them, the homes of which were largely destroyed, the strength of Dr. Carruthers' character was thoroughly tested.

The present noble edifice of Second Parish Church, the largest Congregational meeting house in Portland, was dedicated as a memorial of the great Dr. Payson. So let it ever stand, but there are many who view it as a durable monument to the energy and efficiency of Dr. Carruthers.

Under Dr. Carruthers' long pastorate of 32 years, which terminated in 1878, the Second Parish, notwithstanding the tide of the city's population was away from its centre, nobly held its own and maintained its commanding influence in the city.

Dr. Carruthers found it a church of 388 members; he left it with a membership of 484. If its financial strength had diminished on account of the death and removal of its wealthy adherents, its spiritual power grew apace.

Dr. Carruthers was a man of simple habits, and content with common comforts. Frugal and unostentatious in his manners and life, he reaped a rich reward in long enduring physical and intellectual vigor. He died in Portland, aged ninety years.

I will make no attempt to estimate the debt Portland owes to its three contemporary pastors, who were praying and toiling together for the eighteen years between 1846 and 1864, for its temporal and spiritual prosperity. It is, however, safe to affirm that in no period of its history has Portland been blessed with a more powerful and fruitful ministry than when Drs. Dwight, Chickering and Carruthers were numbered among its clergymen and its citizens.

THE ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

IN THE

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

THE ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Delivered before the Faculty and Students of Bangor Theological Seminary, February 21, 1891.

Standing in the presence of the Professors and students of this School of the Prophets, who are the successors of my beloved instructors of thirty-seven years ago, I disclaim any attempt to discuss the educational or theological aspects of the subject assigned me, and will content myself with the expression of my conviction that the modern pulpit demands preachers broadly educated and thoroughly trained in the higher institutions of learning, and that the larger the intellectual equipment and competency of the clergyman the greater will be his success in the ministry, other things being equal.

It is of the other elements of success, I aim to speak, and it is claimed that there are other things as essential, as are superior intellectual gifts, high culture, and even as sound theology. First, and most fundamentally important, in my view, is:—

I. An abiding consciousness of a divine commission to preach the gospel.

By this is meant not an inward conviction of duty, once experienced in some past solemn hour, but rather a profound, inward, permanent sense of obligation, which abides in the soul, amid all the trials, difficulties and vicissitudes of the ministerial life.

The minister of religion, who is called of God to be Christ's ambassador, to stand before men in Christ's stead, should come to his sacred office, and abide in it, with that Pauline sense of obligation and consecration, which would enable him to say with Paul, "For necessity is laid upon me. Yea, woe is me, if I preach not the gospel." Such an abiding consciousness will not only be an evidence of a divine call, but it will hold a man in unfaltering loyalty to his sacred vocation, and give to him the assurance and certainty of divine guidance and assistance.

We not infrequently meet the statement, that any Christian man, who desires to become a clergyman, may enter the gospel ministry from the same motives, which ordinarily influence men to choose other professions. This opinion is practically a denial of any peculiar sacredness to the ministerial office, and reduces the clergyman's vocation to the level of other professions. Jesus said to the twelve, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you." This was not the Master's call to the duties of the common Christian life, but to the peculiar responsibilities and functions of the ministerial office.

In the Old Testament we read of false prophets whom God did not send, though they spoke in His name and gained the ears and the hearts of the people. Unauthorized and unenlightened teachers were they, who led Israel astray from God.

In the early church the same evil was conspicuous. In Paul's time men arose preaching another gospel, which was not another, misleading the people. The same evil afflicts the churches to-day. A converted young man possessing average intellectual ability, or even superior gifts of intellect, may pass through college and theological school with fair fame both as a scholar and a theologian, may enter the ministry, as far as place and emolument are concerned, at

the top; his pulpit productions may speedily gain for him the popularity he covets; he may prove his ability, as a philosophic, literary, and scholarly preacher; he may be admired for the grace of his oratory and the clearness and beauty of his style; he may, too, be beloved for the sweetness of his spirit and his usefulness in the community, and yet, never become in any true sense a successful minister of the gospel.

In strong contrast with this uncommissioned minister, there are many consecrated men entering our theological schools with slender educational equipments, and comparatively small intellectual endowments, with the voice of a divine call ringing in their ears, and abiding in their souls; and going out from the seminary with intense desire and eagerness to preach Christ and Him crucified, as the only foundation of a saving faith and the only way of salvation. We have seen such men proving their call of God by a life-long, devoted and successful ministry. Given God's call and the response of a consecrated mind and heart, and the path to ministerial success is opened. God has a place for every man He calls, and if He is willing to take that place, and abide in it, he will not fail of sucecss. It may demand long-suffering patience, hard toil, and some bitter experiences at the outset, but these will be God's means of training his chosen servant for greater acievements.

II. It is not enough that the preacher should know the gospel theoretically. He must know its saving power through a personal experience of its reality.

This requires first of all that he should be a converted man, but it means more. He must be taught of God, by the Holy Spirit's tutelage. It is alone by this revealing Spirit of Truth that the preacher can know Christ adequately, and possess the mind of Christ. I hold that this is just as true to-day, and just as needful, as it was in the days of the

Apostles. To them Jesus said: "When the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." Assuredly, this divine promise was not exclusively given to the Apostles. It is for all Christian men, and preeminently for those called of God to be preachers of Christ. "When it pleased God," says Paul, "to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Paul's call came with his conversion. Then followed the revelation of Christ to his soul. It was the Spirit's work in his heart, during those mental struggles in Damascus. Then followed that prolonged experience, in the solitude of Arabia, where through prayer, meditation, and conflict, it may be, he was rooted and grounded in the faith. Thus was Paul prepared by the Holy Spirit's work, for the ministry of the gospel, before he went to Jerusalem to consult with Peter. Success in the ministry now requires that men should not seek the School of the Prophets, until Christ is revealed in them.

Many of Christ's accredited ministers have had no other training for their work than the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, and the best trained scholars and the most competent theologians, need no less to have this same tutelage, and guidance of the Spirit of Truth. This is doubtless what Dr. Parkhurst meant in affirming, "That nine-tenths of a man's equipment for the ministry cannot be learned in any theological seminary." The remark was not intended to disparage the theological school or training. He contends that the preacher should be "a modern prophet."

Philips Brooks expressed the same thought, in more guarded terms, twenty-five years ago, "You are surprised when you read the modern biographies of successful ministers to see how small a part of their culture came from the professional schools. It is a real part, but a small part." That eminent divine of the sixteenth century, Jeremy Taylor,

whom Hannah Moore called "The Shakespeare of the Church," says: "Every man understands more of religion, by his affections than by his reason. It is not the wit of man, but the spirit of man, not so much his head, as his heart, that learns the divine philosophy."

So thought St. John: "Ye have received the unction from above and that annointing teacheth you all things. * * * God's spirit does not destroy reason but heightens it. Unless there be in our hearts a secret conviction by the Spirit of God the gospel itself is a dead letter."

There are some notable illustrations of these statements: Thomas Chalmers preached with great intellectual power for years out of his vast store of scientific thought without any real success in his ministry. In those years he was as enthusiastic a preacher as was Socrates in Athens, who taught excellent morals to his countrymen and never making them moral. But when Chalmers was converted his soul was bathed in that divine light, which Socrates never knew, and then there was spiritual power in his preaching, and multitudes were won to Christ.

Andrew Fuller had a similar experience. After some years in the work of the Christian ministry, he was led to confess that he had never yet entered into its true idea. When he began to preach salvation to all who will believe the gospel, then began his successful career as a Christian minister.

Thomas Scott, the Bible Commentor, thus confesses: "My whole preparation for the ministry consisted in attention to those studies which were more immediately required, for my reputably passing through the previous examination. * * * My views in entering the ministry were three—a desire for a less laborious and comfortable way of procuring a living; the expectation of more leisure for reading; a proud conceit of my abilities, and a vain glorious imagina-

tion that I should some time distinguish myself in the literary world. * * * These were my ruling motives, and my subsequent conduct was suitable to these motives."

After three years of profitless preaching, Thomas Scott was led to realize, and to penitently confess that he had been preaching the gospel in the words which man's wisdom teacheth and not in the words "which the Holy Ghost teacheth." I advise the students I am addressing to read Thomas Scott's little treatise on "The Force of Truth," from which I have quoted.

Candidates for the Christian ministry need to realize that the power of the preacher to move, and win men to Christ, depends upon a living faith, and an abiding fellowship with the Lord.

Certain laymen were once lamenting that their church did not have a revival. "The pastor," said one, "is a powerful preacher; his themes are conversion and the need of it; sin and its consequences, and death and its horrors without Christ. * * * His manner is now commanding and then tender. Year after year he gives us these great sermons. Winter and Summer makes no difference to him. His great alarm-bell is always sounding." Another, who had been his parishioner, said: "I sat under those sermons for years, and at first, when I heard him, I could not imagine how it was that a man who wrestled with such problems, and was shaken with such tempests of feeling, did not sink under the strain. But there was not one sign when he was out of the pulpit, that he cared anything for these things. Before he had wiped the perspiration from his face, he was ready to joke; he never mentioned these things to any one. It did seem sometimes that he was in dead earnest, while he was preaching, but in five minutes after he was out, he was just as ready to trifle as ever."

The writer of this editorial I have quoted, adds this comment: "No preacher can cause those who know him intimately to feel the power of the truth unless they believe he feels it himself."

While in a southern city spending the Winter of 1885 I sat under the preaching of a noted orator. This clergyman, also a professor of divinity, had one sermon on "The Eternal Judgment of Sinners," which he had preached a great many times. He was asked to deliver it, while I was in that city. He replied, "I must have three weeks to prepare myself for the effort." It was an unwritten sermon, and he added, "It takes me three weeks to recover from its depressing effect upon me." I asked what the effect was upon the congregation. "Oh!" he replied, "the same as a tragedy enacted in a theatre. They are thrilled, but I never heard of anybody's being converted." When he did preach it, "the people came from Jerusalem, Galilee and beyond Jordan to hear him." I frequently heard him preach. The power of the sermon was in its eloquence and oratory, not in the preacher; not in his heart perception of truth.

I visited this theological professor in his home. Knowing I was from Portland, he began to talk with great enthusiasm about that great and saintly preacher, Dr. Edward Payson, and when I told him that in the early days of my pastorate I had aged people in my congregation who were Dr. Payson's parishioners he was greatly impressed by the fact, and poured forth an impassioned eulogy of Payson as a preacher. I went into this distinguished theologian's lecture room, and saw him demonstrate the doctrine of justification by faith, with a piece of chalk, and a geometrical figure which was far more mysterious to me than is the scripture doctrine.

It is possible for the preacher to practice intellectual gymnastics in the pulpit. It is possible to generate passion,

as a matter of habit. There is an intellectual glow and emotion that comes into the heart from the brain, and not from the heart into the head. It may not be conscious simulation so much as unconscious delusion. What all preachers need is the Holy Spirit in the heart illuminating and energizing the mind. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." We may not have prophetic revelations, as did the prophets of old, but we may be filled, taught and moved by the Spirit of Truth to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

III. A profound conviction of the reality of human sinfulness, and man's absolute need of the grace of God, revealed in Christ, and His Gospel, is another element of success in the ministry.

Every successful preacher of the gospel must make the chief end of his preaching the salvation of human souls. His chief business is to make known to sinners the grace of God's forgiveness and salvation in Christ. Forty years ago Frederick D. Maurice made this prediction, "A crisis is at hand, which will bring the question to an issue, whether we are believing in a religion of mercy, or in a gospel of deliverance from sin and perdition." The crisis came many years ago. The religions of mercy are preached apart from the revealed severities of the gospel, and not in liberal pulpits only. The impenitent are gladly embracing a religion of mercy, and remaining impenitent. We have been opening wider and wider the doors of admission to the church, and enfolding many whose hearts are to all appearances in the world. "Oh! you Christian women, you are so worldly and you are so Christian," exclaimed a lady prominent in Christian work in Portland, when addressing a women's meeting. Here is the religious condition stated in a sentence.

I am not pessimistic nor am I an alarmist, but I cannot close my eyes to the fact stated by the late Dr. George Leon

Walker, that, "The lack of sin-consciousness and of sin-peril is the ominous characteristic of our time.

At a recent gathering of clergymen, a very devout pastor was speaking of his efforts to awaken his congregation from spiritual slumber. At the same time he spoke enthusiasticlly of their social activities, and their expressed appreciation of their pastor's labors. A brother minister exclaimed, "Your church must be a paradise for preachers. You are the first perfectly contented minister I have ever met." The remark was intended to be complimentary, but it deeply pained the brother, who had praised his church. His emotion was visible, and for a moment he could not reply. At length he said, "For months I have been the most miserable of men. Notwithstanding all I have said, there is no one sign that I am doing the work God called me to do, and the church and congregation need. The people are steeped in worldliness, the men making money, their wives absorbed in parties and entertainment." When asked, if he was not low-spirited and in danger of becoming morbid, he replied, "The facts are just as I have told you and this is cause enough for low spirits."

To meet this discouraging condition in the churches, I suggest that when you young men go forth from this institution as glad heralds of the gospel, you endeavor to provide a remedy for this sad state of worldliness in the churches, by inaugurating a return to a simple, unequivocal and enthusiastic proclamation of the gospel of Christ, which is "The power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The pulpit is discussing the philosophic, historic, socialistic, and ethical relations of religious truth. The searchlight of historical and literary criticism is turned, in full blaze, upon the Bible, and it is enabling us to see what the Bible is, and what it is not. I speak no word of disparagement of this work. But let the saving truth of the gospel, as a divine,

redemptive deliverance from sin, be the powerful and abiding theme of your pulpit discourses.

Dr. Leon Walker, not long before his death, expressed his fear that, "the current period of the religious life of the churches is characterized by a lessened sense of sin-consciousness, manifested in the teachings of the pulpit, and the habits of the people," and he testified that, "entrance into church membership and Christian profession have been attended by no considerable struggle of spirit, no very humiliating sense of guilt and desert of condemnation, and by no considerable changes and purposes and habits of life." I believe this statement is abundantly justified by the indifference of the churches to these existing conditions.

IV. The successful minister must be more than a faithful preacher of the gospel. He must be, in his pastoral labors, an earnest seeker of souls, revealing to his people, that he not only loves and cares for them, but that he fears for them, and is deeply concerned for their spiritual and eternal welfare. That preacher is to be commended who toils in his study to prepare pulpit messages of truth and persuasion for his Sabbath congregations. But not less to be commended is that minister who delights to serve the Lord in the homes of his flock, carrying to them instruction and counsel in familiar converse. Dr. Cuyler has wisely observed that ,"Not one in ten of ministerial candidates can become a great preacher, but the nine true preachers of the gospel can become great pastors."

And I am led to say that it is the holy personality of the preacher that makes the successful pastor. The preacher who preaches to save souls, will by his presence in the families of his flock radiate his own Christian spirit. This sums up all I need to say to you upon the matter of pastoral visitation. "No good can be done without the element of personal character," was the saying of that greatest of great

men, David Livingstone, "Neither at Rio, or on shipboard, nor anywhere, can good be done without the element of personal character." Engrave that wise saying upon your hearts. It was the secret of the moral grandeur of David Livingstone. A companion of Livingstone, who was to him, as Jonathan was to David, wrote of him, after his death, "I was much impressed by the fact that Livingstone never prayed without the petition that we might imitate Christ in all His inimitable perfections."

There is but one word which adequately expresses the amplitude of that quality of character, which can make the Christian minister a successful preacher and pastor, and that word is holiness, and holiness belongs to that man whose whole being, spirit, soul and body is consecrated, and devoted to the service of Christ.

Sermons

ELIJAH KELLOGG

A TRIBUTE

Permission of Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company, Boston,
from "Elijah Kellogg, the Man and his Work,"
by Professor Wilmot B. Mitchell.

SERMON DELIVERED AT FUNERAL OF

ELIJAH KELLOGG.

In one of the Paschal Psalms God's thought and feeling is expressed concerning the death of His consecrated servants, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Our Heavenly Father rejoices to welcome home the saint from the toil and trouble of this earth-time service.

Angels rejoice when one sinner repenteth, and the toilsome life of faith is begun on earth. But when the sinner becomes a saint and the long, weary trialway is trodden through to its end; when, as the Lord sees, His servant's work is done, then it is precious in His sight to welcome the faithful worker into the saints' everlasting rest above.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of this well-beloved and honored saint, whose devoted life of service to the church is known to us all. What minister of Maine has ever been more loved and revered by its people than Elijah Kellogg?

Fifty-seven years ago his life ministry began, where, a few days past it ended in the humble village of Centre Harpswell. A young man, thirty years old, just from Andover Theological Seminary, he began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Harpswell; an aged man of nearly eighty-eight years, known and honored far and wide in our land, he closed his life work among the people he had seen grow up from childhood to declining age. He has baptized the children and the grandchildren of those who were his first parishioners. He has buried the parents and in many instances the grand-parents of those who loved,

supported and revered him in the last years of his laborious ministry.

If we ask why he remained so long among them when called to other and more inviting fields of toil. Why, when this honored Second Parish of Portland invited him to its pastorate in the days of its strength and prime, he declined to leave the little country church of forty or fifty members? The answer is, because he loved the Harpswell people—they were his first love; they were his last love. And this simple truthful answer reveals the unselfish, the humble, the devoted spirit of the man. Highly privileged people! God blessed church! To have had such a holy man of God living among them, passing by them continually; speaking God's truth to them in love; serving them in their homes, in their fields, in their sanctuary with the Christ spirit of devotion, abiding with, and living out his rich and fruitful life of faith among them, content and satisfied to have their love and devotion, and with his dying breath speaking his last loving benediction upon them every one. It has been a beautiful life of service, a noble ministry for God and humanity.

We have often wondered what Elijah Kellogg would have been had he chosen to take his father's pulpit and the position and the prominence which it would have given him in our city, and throughout our State. It might possibly have made a grander preacher than he was—and few are the preachers that ever came to Portland pulpits who drew larger or more satisfied congregations than did he—he might have been a more influential clergyman in our State than he was; but who will say he could have developed a grander character, or won a fairer fame than now belong to him?

Elijah Kellogg was a man of deep and fervid piety—a faithful man in prayer. There are guest chambers in our

city where his voice has been heard in prayer for hours at a time, the memory of which is a benediction.

There is a chamber on Munjoy Hill in which I have often slept which Elijah Kellogg often occupied as the guest of one of his former Harpswell families. In that chamber he wrote parts of many of his surpassing juvenile stories and there he prayed often and long.

Being a man of prayer, it was his wish and will to abide where God would have him. It was God's will that of the fifty-eight years of his ministry, the Harpswell people should have his service, nearly all of the time, for forty-three years and part of the time each of the remaining fifteen years.

During the ten years he was minister of the Seaman's Bethel in Boston, as chaplain of the Seaman's Friend Society; he spent his summer in his Harpswell home, preaching and ministering to the people. So that counting out the five years of his Topsham pastorate, we may say that his connection with the church of Harpswell Centre was practically unbroken for fifty-three years, and during his pastorate in Topsham he still dwelt in his Harpswell home.

His work in Boston brought out one prominent characteristic of his ministry of which I would speak, viz.: his interest in and love of young men. Elijah Kellogg was every man's friend, but he was preeminently the friend and helper of young men. As he delighted to write books for boys, which helped them to become right-minded and true-hearted young men, so he aimed in preaching and by personal effort to reach and save young men. He did so conspicuously in Boston. At the time when Dr. Stone was pastor of Park Street Congregational Church, Mr. Kellogg was preaching in the Purchase Street Bethel Church of that city. At that time Dr. Charles G. Finney was at work as a revivalist with Dr. Stone. Rev. Mr. Kellogg had been and was then and subsequently, in the habit of meeting a class

of young men in Dr. Stone's chapel. From among those young men he trained Christian workers and led down into the slums of the North End to help him in his work, holding meetings on the wharves.

One of those young men I knew years afterwards, who devoted much of his spare time aiding Elijah Kellogg in his good work among the tempted classes of the North End. Two years later that young man came to Portland to live. He became a worker, then a member of the St. Lawrence Street Church. When Rev. Mr. Kellogg was back again in Harpswell, this young man was a prominent merchant, politician and Christian worker in this city.

At the dedication of the new St. Lawrence Congregational Church in 1897, Mr. Kellogg made two memorable addresses, in one of which he alluded to the lamented Henry H. Burgess, who had died in 1893, in these words:—"When I was preaching in Boston, Henry H. Burgess was the bookkeeper for a paint and oil firm in that city, and a member of the Park Street Sunday School. I was preaching at that church, and saw that the people were sending out old men to gather the young men into the Sunday School. I told them they would never do any good in that way, and asked them why they did not send out young men to do this work. They said they did not have any young men to do it, and I said I would get some of them for the purpose. I preached one sermon, and the first Sunday after that I walked fifteen young men into that Sunday School, with Henry Burgess at their head, and the next Sunday in came twenty more, and so on, until the chapel would not hold them, and finally the building was crowded to its utmost capacity, and we had young men to work for us. When Henry Burgess came to Portland from Boston, I gave him a letter of introduction to Dr. Carruthers. He is no longer here," continued the aged speaker, while tears of emotion coursed down his

bronzed cheeks. "But though absent in the body, he is rejoicing here with us in the spirit."

They loved each other, the aged minister and the strong young man. They were helpful to each other. They have changed eyes and clasped hands, now, I believe, in the eternal home of the saints.

It was during Mr. Kellogg's life in Boston, in his home on Pinckney Street, that he wrote his marvelous books for young people. Is there here man or woman, young man or maiden, who has not read them and gathered moral tone and stamina out of them?

Perhaps it is true to say, and no discredit to Mr. Kellogg, to say, that he was more widely known as author than as preacher, and that he has probably done more for the moral health of American youth by his breezy, fascinating books than by his work as preacher and pastor. Yea, he has been a mighty preacher to the young by the eloquence of his industrious pen.

It would, I believe, be difficult to find an author who has written with a more definite and practical aim to Christianize young people than has Elijah Kellogg, or one who has had better success in the attainment of his high and noble purpose.

Mr. Kellogg possessed a genius for that kind of literary work. That he had, in early years, the latent art of an accomplished rhetorician, was proven in his student days, when he wrote and declaimed "Spartacus to the Gladiators," while in Andover Theological Seminary.

It is well, doubtless, that Mr. Kellogg's literary genius was directed to the humbler, yet more practical and serviceable art of writing books, for the moral and religious culture of the young.

As a preacher, Mr. Kellogg was great, both in the art of making and in the forceful presentation of the sermon.

Rhetorical finish and enlivening humor were, alike natural and easy to him. I never have heard a preacher who seemed more thoroughly to enjoy the effort of preaching and few preachers excelled him in the ability to make his audience enjoy the sermon. How quickly could he change the amused interest of the congregation in the play of his humor, into serious and solemn emotion by the power and pathos of his forceful appeals in applying the teaching of his sermon to the conscience and the heart.

He was a man of quick and responsive sympathies. His whole life was characterized by the spirit of Christian benevolence.

He not only gave himself to his people to be ever and always their servant in things spiritual, but as truly in things temporal. He was their counsellor and helper in all their heavenly and earthly concerns. It was the habit of his life to keep a purse for the Lord, into which went one-tenth of all moneys received by him. Thus he furnished himself, systematically, with the means to extend aid to those whose sufferings appealed to his sympathies. It is said that he gave beyond his means, and often to his own embarrassment. His services as a preacher were in constant demand, from churches far and near, and he responded when he could. Not a few churches have been blessed by his labors, at different intervals, during his Harpswell pastorate. Here in Portland he was greatly beloved. Portland claimed him as her own. He preached at Cumberland Mills; at Wellesley, Rockport and New Bedford, Mass., and other places, he has served the church of God. The Congregational Church in New Bedford extended him a call, as did this Second Parish. But he refused all such calls, being unwilling to make any final severance from his beloved Harpswell people.

In 1889, after the close of his Topsham pastorate, he resumed full pastoral care of the Harpswell Church, which had been served by others during his work elsewhere, and, there he remained until God called him home. It was a wonder to us all, how this venerable man, with the infirmities of extreme old age creeping upon him, could still keep on preaching in his 88th year, two sermons each Sunday, and ministering as a pastor to his flock.

His last visit to Portland was during "the Old Home Week" last August. He opened the festivities of that notable week by preaching Sunday morning in this church, upon invitation of its pastor and preaching again in the evening of that day at Yarmouth. Returning Monday morning to the home of his niece in the homestead of his honored father, the first pastor of this church, who died in that historic house on Cumberland Street in 1842, aged eighty years.

Elijah Kellogg married after the age of forty, Hannah Pomeroy, the daughter of the Rev. Thaddeus Pomeroy, pastor at Gorham, Me., from 1832 to 1839.

Two children survive this union, both residing in Melrose Highlands, Mass., Frank Gilman Kellogg and Mary Catherine, the wife of Mr. Harry Bachelder. I was called to officiate at the funeral sermon of their mother in the Cumberland home referred to, and rode to the grave with her sorrowing husband. Returning from the cemetery, the aged grief-stricken man, said: "Now I will return to my home to be alone with my God." His words have been living in my memory ever since. They implied that he was sure of finding the God of all comfort, in that secluded and desolated home on Harpswell's shore. Who doubts but the God we love dwelt there with his aged servant, strengthening and supporting him in his loneliness and sorrow.

His children desired greatly to have their father with them in their pleasant homes, but he chose to dwell among the people whom God gave him to serve, unto the end. "I will die in the harness," he would say, in answer to their appeals. I have from the lips of his son the words of the last prayer he was heard to offer some days before his death. "I thank God for a Christian mother, who consecrated me to Christ and the Christian ministry." The prayer was followed by his repeating of the 23d Psalm. I am told that in features and in character, he was most like that Christian mother. Her maiden name was Eunice McClellan. She was born in Gorham in 1777, a direct descendant from Hugh McClellan, the second settler of that town. In one of Elijah Kellogg's earliest books, entitled "Good Old Times," he tells the story of his "grandfather's struggles for a homestead." It is a purely historical narrative. Just before Elijah Kellogg passed away from earth, he delivered this touching message for his Harpswell flock: "I want to send my love to all these people." Having loved his own, like his dear Lord, he loved them unto the end. Yesterday the message was delivered to them by Prof. Chapman in his funeral discourse. The very last words of the venerable man of God, and this faithful shepherd of God's people, were these: "I am so thankful."

Let us not attempt to interpret the words, they teach us that his Christian heart was overflowing with gratitude to God. He was dying in a good old age. His children around him, his people near him. He was gathered to his fathers after a long, faithful, heroic, noble life.

He leaves with us a most precious and a most blessed memory. Our hearts, too, are full of gratitude to God for the life of Elijah Kellogg on earth.

GOD'S CARE FOR YOU

Casting all your care on Him, for He careth for you.
1 Peter, V:17.

My theme is the Care of God for Mankind. It is revealed that our Heavenly Father has a peculiar love and care for those who become His children through faith in, and loyalty to, His Son Jesus Christ; they are called the sons and daughters of God, and are dear to Him "as the apple of His eye." I would not overlook this blessed revelation of the Divine Word. I seek to establish this revealed truth in human minds, but there are manifold proofs both in the book of nature, and the book of revelation, that God cares for all His earthly children.

It is one of the saddest and most surprising things concerning our common human nature, that it is so unresponsive in thanksgiving and praise, in view of the multitudinous indications and revelations of God's loving kindness and care for His earthly children. Among the invisible things of God, which are clearly seen and understood by the things that are made, nothing is more conspicuous than God's care for all living creatures, and His special goodness and graciousness towards the children of men.

"For He careth for you." This is the single argument to enforce the duty of casting our care on God. If this is indeed a positive truth, revealed both in nature and revelation, then surely it ought to be realized in our daily experience, and lead to daily acknowledgments, praises and thanksgivings. What an unspeakably sad thing it is to live out our human lives unmindful of, and ungrateful for the infinite care of God.

We are often grieved and shocked over the ingratitude of children toward their parents. Living in the paternal

home, tenderly nurtured and carefully trained, constant recipients of parental kindness, love and care, yet growing up unfilial, disobedient, graceless and thankless. Nothing, we feel, is more reprehensible than such ingratituude, but how many multitudes of men and women seem to be just such graceless and thankless children, only of larger growth, and far more reprehensible and inexcusable. The child may wear threadbear the garments his mother's wearied hand has made for him, with no responsive appreciation, or gratitude for her labors of love; and we can frame an excuse for such thoughtlessness, in the immature child, but who can frame a reasonable excuse for forgetfulness of God, and thanklessness for His unfailing benefits and care, which characterize the lives of vast numbers of undevout, and irreligious people. How often are God's people moved to exclaim with the psalmist, "O, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness; and for His wonderful works unto the children of men."

I. Consider God's care for man's material well being.

Behold His wonderful work in furnishing and adorning this earth for human abode. The subject is too vast for more than a few illustrative and suggestive hints. Think of the marvelous adaptation of the earth to meet and satisfy the necessities of human nature, revealing God's forethought for man's happiness and comfort. The world was made for man, not man for the world. Man was made to possess it and use it for his own benefit and enjoyment. How great and noble a being is man, to have such a beautiful and glorious abode provided for him. What thoughtful, loving care for man does this evince. A world which God pronounced good at its creation. A world filled with spontaneous products suitable and available for human sustenance and enjoyment; a world responsive to human industry and enterprise; a resourceful world furnished with

inexhaustable treasures and yielding good things in lavish abundance to the industry of the husbandman, the explorer, the artificer, the miner and inventor. And, withal, a world adorned with beauty, that human love and admiration for the beautiful might be gratified.

We can conceive that it might have been otherwise, even though our conception should prove our ignorance; for we must believe that God has made the best world possible for such a being as man. We can conceive, however, that there might have been all of nature's utility without nature's beauty. Grain without gracefulness, fruit-trees without attractive foliage, and fruit itself possessing no soft and tempting coloring. So too there might have been falling snowflakes without exquisitely beautiful chrystallizations. A central sun to give all sufficient light and heat to our earth, but never painting golden sunsets. A moon, also, to illumine the night, but devoid her placid beauty.

But our thoughtful and gracious God did not so create this earth for our abode. He has permeated and flooded it with beauty, making "everything beautiful in its season," that His earthly children might have delight in all His works.

Therefore, He has created us with a capacity for perceiving, admiring, and enjoying the beautiful in nature. To every devout and thoughtful mind these are all tokens and evidences of God's forethought and care for man. It would seem that every intelligent observer of nature would respond in gratitude and love to God for all this lavish wealth of beauty and utility which pervades and adorns our earthly home. But, alas! it is far otherwise. Multitudes are charmed with all this beauty, and profited by all this utility, without thanksgiving to, or thought of, its beneficent creator. Men forge God iron, mine God gold and silver, utilize God's electrical power, draw from the earth

rich treasures of mineral wealth, and from the sea the means of sustenance and health, and how often, with no voice of praise on their tongues, or gratitude in their hearts for the inexhaustible bounty of their creator.

Each summer's day comes to us full-freighted with the bountiful gifts of God's care. All the voices of nature seem to be whispering in our ears: "He careth for you." We may hear them in the bowing branches of the fruit-laden trees; in the drooping clusters of fruits and flowers, which adorn our gardens, and make beautiful and fragrant our highway hedges. How lavish is the wealth of nature for the comfort and enjoyment of mankind.

II. No less marvelous are the evidences which human nature affords, that God cares for man's intellectual progress.

He who made the human eye to behold His beautiful works in nature, the ear to hear the songs of the birds, and the heart to delight in all the loveliness of the world, designed also, that man by searching into God's works should find, not only mental enjoyment, but intellectual growth. This world was not made merely for man's abode, but for his education and culture. Nature is not only God's storehouse, but God's schoolhouse, that man in thoughtful contemplation of her forces and laws might grow both in useful and delightful knowledge, and in intellectual power. Hence the world is filled with its buried secrets that the human mind might develop its powers in formulating and establishing natural sciences.

Through his superior endowments of intellect and will man has become the master of the world's material forces. In one view of human history we learn what man has wrought in the earth by the might of his will and energy; in another view we behold what nature's unconscious forces have done for the development of his physical and mental

powers. If the mind of man is civilizing the earth, it is nature's forces that have invited and inspired his grandest efforts. It was the design of the Almighty Creator, that the world of nature should become subject to man, for his education and development, as an intellectual being. And, in this view, we may find abundant evidences of God's beneficent care for mankind, for all mankind.

III. God's care for man revealed in nature is far surpassed by the revelation of His grace to mankind.

The gospel revelation of our Creator's care for a race of human sinners transcends all our powers of speech or thought to describe. The love of God made manifest in Christ for the salvation of the human race is marvelous beyond all our conception. It will be the theme of our study and admiration in the spiritual world. Even the angels desire to look into it. The God, whose name is Love, leaves not his earth-born children under the blight and destruction of sin, to the light and law of nature. Under nature's light and law mankind would perish in their ignorance, ingratitude and perversity. It is written: "God so loved the world that he gave"—what? The beauty, utility and riches of the earth, the wealth of the sea and the light of nature. No, not these! "He gave His only begotten son." The possibility of an eternal redemption from sin and guilt demanded more than nature's revelation of the divine beneficence. God's concern and care for man's highest well-being could only find adequate expression in a perfect human life wholly devoted in service to humanity, in the spirit of entire and perfect self-sacrifice. Such an exemplification of the sacrificial love that belongs to the character of Almighty God was impossible for any human being, belonging to a sinful human race to make. Only a divinely perfect character could thus represent the heart of God. It demanded just what God provided, in the gift of

His eternal son to assume our nature and live His perfect life of love and sacrifice on earth.

The wonderful, measureless, infinite love of Our Heavenly Father could only find expression and revelation to human hearts in the gift and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God himself. "God so loved the world—so cared for human beings—that He gave His only-begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is the highest possible revelation of God's care for mankind. That gift of love is measured to our conception, by all that Bethlehem's manger and Calvary's cross mean to believing hearts.

"It is a most significant fact," writes Dr. W. N. Clark, one of our greatest thinkers and theologians, "that when God sought to save the world He brought into existence a human being in perfect fellowship with Himself. In that one perfect human being made perfect through suffering—manifesting His own mighty sacrificial love, the eternal Father has full satisfaction. Christ was perfectly acceptable to God, because He perfectly manifested God's redeeming love." Therefore, if we would know the redeeming love of God we must know the meaning of Bethlehem's manger and Calvary's cross. What was Christ born into this world to accomplish for sinful humanity? Why must He yield up His life on Calvary's cross for sinful men? He was born into our sinful lot, Himself without sin, to bring sinful humanity into harmony with God. He died on Calvary's cross to give to humanity an adequate revelation of the sacrificial love of God. Both God and His Divine Son were coöperating in that sacrifice. No mere man could by dying on a cross reveal the love and care of God for sinful humanity. If Christ were a mere man, no matter how superior His goodness, or perfect His righteousness, He could have no power to redeem and save us from our sin

and guilt. But He was so one with God, in His nature and spirit, so related to the Eternal Father, and identified with Him in His thought, love, and care, that He could say with a profound meaning, "I and my Father are one." When He yielded Himself unto death, in behalf of a race of sinners, His death on the cross was an all sufficient revelation of the redeeming sacrificial love of God. The Father was well pleased with His son, because He so perfectly represented and revealed His own love for mankind.

In justice and fairness to the teaching of my text I cannot close this sermon without reminding you that Peter was writing to those heroic Christians, of his time, who were believers in Christ, and through perils and persecutions were partakers of Christ's sufferings. For their comfort and strengthening he says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

Faith in God as our Heavenly Father, faith in Christ as our Redeemer, this is the experience we all need to enable us to cast the burden of our cares for our sinfulness and spiritual needs, upon God. King David sings his sweetest song of trust, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," in the confidence of his faith and the fullness of his joy. Every note of that song of faith reveals its author's ability to cast all his care on God. Shall not we all in our greater knowledge concerning the redeeming love of God, and the restoring grace of our Lord and Saviour, cast all our anxious cares on our Heavenly Father, in our living faith that, by His love unto death, Christ hath redeemed us.

I fully believe that the psalmist's words, "I shall not want," refer to temporal necessities as well as to eternal realities. Scripture promises abundantly bear out this view. "Fear the Lord O ye saints, for there is no want to them

that fear Him." "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." To these quotations I add, "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." But perhaps the most assuring and comforting promise of all needful earthly provision, is the saying of Jesus, "Take no anxious thought about what ye shall eat or drink or wherewithal ye shall be clothed. Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Many years ago a London nobleman sent to a clergyman, who was ministering to the poor in one of the most destitute parts of that vast city, a gift of one hundred pounds to be divided among the Lord's people wanting bread. He was urgent in his request that the recipients should be Christian believers. He desired to befriend the Lord's people.

This gift filled the minister's heart with joy, as he thought upon the many Christians to whom he could extend relief. But his next thought was perplexing. How should he know who really were the Lord's people? After much reflection he decided that communicants of any Christian church who were walking worthily must be held eligible, and after long search and inquiry he failed to find any such people wanting bread. He then addressed letters to his fellow workers in London, Baptist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Church of England, informing them of the gift and its conditions and to send to him cures for relief. "I waited a week for replies and there was not one applicant," he said. In the midst of thirty thousand unemployed and famishing people—men, women and children—not one was found wanting bread.

He was not satisfied and extended his inquiries and investigation for several years, making ceaseless and unsuccessful search for one of the Lord's people wanting bread. He sought throughout all London and surrounding towns

and villages in England and Scotland, challenging believers and unbelievers, and none were found wanting bread. I present to my hearers this practical proof of the scripture promise. Isa. XXXIII:16. I present to you this wonderful testimony, as a practical illustration of God's fatherly care of His believing children.

Let us never forget to whom these sweet and gracious promises of God are given, not to the worldly-minded and self-sufficient, who are seeking earthly riches, or power or fame, more than they are seeking God and truth and righteousness; not to the improvident, the Godforgetful, who are spending money for that which is not bread, and which satisfieth not, but to those who seek God's kingdom first, and His righteousness, as their supreme felicity.

And now is it not clear how sinful mortals can cast all their cares on God? It is to behold God's love and care gloriously revealed in Jesus Christ for all mankind. Just as a little child, in simple confidence and trust, casts all its fears, troubles and cares upon its parents, so trust your Heavenly Father, and believe in your gracious Redeemer and cast off all cares of the past, the present and the future; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

BROTHERLY LOVE

"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." JOHN XIII:35.

Perhaps the most important lesson to be derived from these words of our Lord, is that which comes to us by the way of inference. Our Lord's language here leads us to infer that He designed and expected that His followers should be recognized and known as such by the world. He would have all men know that they are true disciples. It is clear from this, and from other passages in His last discourses to the twelve, that He depended upon this public recognition of the loyalty of His professed followers, as the necessary and powerful means of promoting His cause in the earth. The world was to be convinced that He was the Christ, and the Saviour of mankind more through their personalities than through their preaching. They were commissioned, not only to teach the doctrine of His religion, but to exemplify its spirit and precepts; not only to be the outspoken defenders of the truth, but to be "living epistles of that truth, known and read of all men." So we hear the Lord praying that His disciples may be sanctified by the truth, and exhibit among themselves such a loving spirit of harmony "that the world may both know and believe" that He was sent of God.

This remarkable passage in John seventeenth, teaches directly the truth which the text implies. The absorbing thought in the mind of Jesus was of the conviction of the unbelieving world. Listen to the very words: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one;" "that they may be made perfect in one," "and that the world may know that Thou

hast sent Me;" "that they may all be one;" "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

Whenever, then, this unity of which the Saviour speaks is realized among believers, there men will be convinced of the divinity of Christ, and of the divine origin of christianity, and so of the power of the gospel. This must be so, or Christ prayed in vain. The genuine brotherhood of believers in Christ is the most powerful means of commending the gospel to the world. "By this, shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Here we are taught that love is the bond of this world-moving and world-convincing unity. If we have love one to another, the world will know—all men who have relations with us, who observe our lives, or reflect upon our characters—will know, not only that we are the disciples of Christ, but that the Lord we love and serve is the very Christ of God. This is the unmistakable logic of our text.

We are led, therefore, to ask what this love is in its nature and manifestations, of which Christ speaks?

It is generally allowed that the words are Christ's own commentary on the scene of the feet-washing which preceded.

Our Lord rose from supper, laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself; then, pouring water into a basin, proceeded one by one, to wash the feet of His disciples. This act was intended, not to show His own wonderful condescension, not to drill them in the grace of humility, but to illustrate, before their eyes and hearts, the nature, spirit and quality of that love which must characterize them as a Christian brotherhood. It was a most tangible and soul-moving proof of His own love for them, but the direct intent of it all was to indelibly impress upon their hearts the true idea of that love, which should be at once the bond of their Christian fellowship, and the proof to the

world of their discipleship. So, after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments and was set down again, He said unto them: "Know ye what I have done to you?" "Do you understand the lesson I have given?" "Have you penetrated through the form to the spirit of the performance?" "Has the truth sunk down into your hearts?" "Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye say well, for so I am."

"If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." There was a time when "the example" was looked for in the specific act of the feet washing, but we know that the example is in the embodied and illustrated principle of that act. To wash the saints' feet is to minister to the saints in the spirit of holy love. Before His disciples, the Lord took the servant's place. "He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant." The feet washing is a picture of Christ's whole life. "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." His entire ministry was the service of love. It was this element of character, more than any other, that astonished men. This was a new exhibition—a strange spectacle in that age, to see the Jewish Rabbi becoming the willing, humble, unwearied servant of men—the poorest and vilest of men at that. This, I say, was a new manifestation of love—love that was the motive power of self-sacrifice and service. It is here, perhaps, that we get our insight into our Lord's meaning when He speaks of this law of love as a new commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." But we must not stop short here, if we would obtain a true conception of this new commandment: "That ye love one another as I have loved you." The newness of the commandment lies in the power imparted to it by our Lord's example. The old Mosaic law contained this command-

ment of love. It is not new, as a law or a precept; it is the old commandment, which, as John said, we have heard from the beginning. But, on the lips of Jesus, this commandment is new, because it was in Him perfectly exemplified, and perfectly fulfilled. It became in his teaching the central law of life. It was the perfect law of liberty, which governed His own life, and which must be the motive and power of all Christian living. Whoever apprehends this law of love, and submits himself to it, discovers a new commandment. Duty is no longer his supreme watchword, but love. Faith is no longer the greatest of the Christian graces, but love. For He sees that without love, faith is nothing; knowledge is nothing; duty is nothing, and He Himself is nothing. So it becomes impossible that there should be any powerful unity in faith, without this supreme factor of love as the bond of Christian fellowship. We might get all Christian disciples on the same platform of religious belief, and the spectacle itself, alone, would fail to move the world. All Christendom may have one creed, and that a short one; we may get all the denominations smiling on each other, and shaking hands in fraternal responses over their mental partition walls, and that will not make the world believe that Christ is the Son of God, but let all Christian bodies, whatever their creeds or intellectual opinions respecting doctrines, manifest the love that filled and empowered the soul of Jesus. Let self-sacrificing, self-forgetting, self-devoting service characterize the churches of Christendom and the world will know and believe that Christ is the Lord of those Churches, and that He is indeed the Lord from heaven. This is the unity Christ contemplated, that they should be one as He and the Father were one. One in will, purpose and love. Having one common spirit, aim and work. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

First of all this love must be made manifest in the Christian community, as a controlling, fraternal affection. It must bring forth its visible fruits in the church. Christians must love one another fervently as brethren, not in word, merely, not in tongue, but in truth and in deed. Christian love must first be brotherly love. It cannot overleap this first requirement and assert itself as a broader love of the world. In the order of the graces, brotherly love comes first, then charity, which is the love of man. That is certainly a defective and powerless charity which does not love the brethren fervently. We are not to forget that while it is the Christian's duty to love all men, and serve all men, as we have opportunity, yet he is especially required to do good to those who are of the household of faith.

Christ, Himself, manifested a peculiar love for, and a peculiar devotion to, His own disciples. "Having loved His own," we are taught in this very chapter, "He loved them unto the end," not unto the end of His earthly life, it were certainly superfluous to say that, but unto the end or uttermost of His power to love. He loved them with His whole heart, with all the mighty energy of His great soul. "Knowing that He should depart out of this world, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the uttermost." How deeply St. John saw into the heart of Jesus! And when, as an aged man, he recalled and recorded this scene of the feet-washing, he remembered it as manifesting Christ's tender, yearning love for His disciples, and he remembered how the Lord had said to them: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you."

Christ's love for the church is here made the measure of our love for each other as Christian brethren. Not that we can match it in its fullness and degree, but that we can and ought to manifest the same quality of love. Think how

Christ manifested His love for them that night before the cross. How gentle, how merciful, how anxious for their comfort and instruction was He! What sympathy for their trouble, what desire to strengthen and support them! How thoughtless of Himself, how full of care and solicitude for them! How patient with their ignorance and weakness, and hopeful of their future! Nothing was left unsaid for their instruction; nothing left undone for their consolation. The promise of the Comforter was given to them over and over again. All these discourses and counsels and prayers were the breathing out of His heart's love. "As I have loved you." Have we, brethren, set this example of Christ's love before us as distinctly as we ought? Do we love one another as fervently as this example requires? St. John affirms that this brotherly love is the satisfactory evidence of spiritual birth. "We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." This brotherly love was both inculcated and exemplified in the Apostolic age, and the result was that the heathen looked on with amazement and admiration, and said, "Behold how these Christians love one another." It was this manifestation of Christian love within the circle of the brotherhood that gave the gospel such power and success in the first century.

The first social development of this brotherly love was the temporary system of mutual self-sacrifice and support, known under the name of "Community of goods." Then, those loving Christians continued not only "in the apostle's doctrine, but in fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and parted their goods to all, as every man had need," and then it was that love and joy reigned in their hearts, "and they did eat their bread in gladness and singleness of heart, praising God,"

and, mark this, having favor with all the people. "And the Lord added daily to the church such as were being saved."

Delightful picture of brotherly love! Wonderful manifestation of the power of Christ! It was the same unspeakable gift of grace, which Paul observed with joy in the Gentile churches, when "their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

But it is not the special form or method which the spirit of brotherly love assumed in the early church that we need to contemplate. Forms change, methods become antiquated, but principles survive. The same spirit of love which exhibited itself in the social communism of the Christians at Jerusalem, will, whenever it really exists, prove itself adequate to meet all emergencies. Communism passed away speedily; it was only a temporary expedient. The principle of Christian love does not demand that we have all things in common, but that we have an interest in, and care for, one another, which will show itself in mutual affection, intercourse and burden-bearing. It requires that we forget not to do good and to communicate to each other, especially that we have respect to each other's necessities. That the wise brother minister in the spirit of tenderness to the brother that is less instructed; that the brother strong in faith, encourage and upbuild those weak in faith; that the wealthy brother relieve the necessities of those who have an insufficiency of this world's goods; that those who stand upon the higher ground of Christian liberty, be careful not to wound the consciences of those who are in bondage to weak scruples. In a word, that Christians "have fervent charity among themselves;" that they fulfill among themselves "the royal law of liberty," according to the New Testament rule, which, as St. James declares, requires that we "love our neighbor as ourselves." The Christian brother or sister is our nearest neighbor. If we fail to love our

brother whom we have seen, with whom we stand in covenant relations, and sit with at the communion of the holy sacrament, how can we make it appear that we love God, whom we have not seen? We cannot. So is it impossible for the church to manifest to the world the love of Christ, if this love is not first made manifest in the Christian brotherhood.

The reality and manifestation of our brotherly love becomes, then, in the light of this teaching of Christ, a matter of first importance. So much depends upon this. It is so vitally connected with our own spiritual well-being as churches, and with our personal influence upon the unconverted world, that it becomes us to ask if we are giving the matter the attention and thought it deserves. There is, in every Christian church, probably, much earnest prayer and desire for spiritual power. We are strong in many ways, to augment our Christian influence. We try to make our services attractive. We study to embellish our Christian discourses, to make them interesting, as well as instructive. We invite social intercourse in our church assemblies. This is all well. The aim is good. There may be no reason to question the rightfulness of these methods, but with all these, and other appliances for winning the world to the church, have we really set about the task of internal improvements? Has any decided effort been made to bring about a more powerful, more real manifestation of our Christian love?

Were it so, membership in the local church would be esteemed as a much greater privilege than it is now felt to be. Were it so, believers would not forsake the assembling of themselves together, "as the manner of some is," or as may be said now, "as the manner of many is." Were it so, the love of the Christian brethren would not only be ex-

pressed in public songs, but in personal self-denying services. We should sing of the church not only:—

"Beyond our highest joy
We prize her heavenly ways,"

but

"To her my cares and toils be given,
'Till toils and cares shall end."

and this brotherly love would be a comprehensive and far-reaching affection. It would go beyond the church, and the church community, stretching forth its arms of sympathy and kindness to all the needy and oppressed.

Christian love is never narrow. It cannot be circumvented. It cannot be confined within set limits. It is impossible to shut it up within the church. There, it may exist, as a fountain, whose streams flow forth to refresh the waste and desert places.

Brotherly love in the church is a reservoir of spiritual power. Show me the disciple who loves his brethren fervently, and I will show you a man who loves his neighbor as himself, and is praying and toiling for the salvation of souls.

And show me a church—I care not how small its numbers or feeble in pecuniary resources—that is characterized by this holy spirit of brotherly love, where there is union in thought, purpose and feeling; where its members are serving one another in love, and I will show you the church that is accomplishing much for the Lord's kingdom. Such a church will be a power in its community; it will have more than a name to live; it will have a record in this world, as well as on high.

John Bunyan tells us that it was the holy joy and loving fellowship of the little Baptist church in Bedford, that led him to long to be numbered among them. The state and happiness of those poor people were presented to him in a kind of vision. "I saw," he says, "as if they were on the sunny side of some high mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow and dark clouds. Methought, also, betwixt me and them, I saw a wall that did compass about this mountain. Now, through this wall my soul did greatly desire to pass, concluding that if I could, I would go into the very midst of them and there comfort myself with the heat of their sun."

Bunyan tells us the meaning of this vision to him. The mountain signified the church of the living God. The sun that shone thereon was the comfortable shining of His merciful face upon them that were within. The wall was that which separates the people of God from the world. This resemblance, says Bunyan, abode in me for many weeks during which I did vehemently desire to become one of that number. "I cannot," he adds, "express with what longings and breathings in my soul I cried to God to call me. I was in a flame to be converted to Christ, and also did see in that day such glory in a converted state that I could not be contented without a share therein." "Gold, could I have gotten it for gold, that would I have given for it. How lovely was everyone in my eyes that I thought to be converted. The lot seemed to me to have fallen to such in pleasant places. They had a goodly heritage." How ardent and glowing, how genuine, must have been the piety of those poor people in Bedford church, thus to have enraptured Bunyan's soul. How attractive their fellowship. It is pleasant to read that, when Bunyan at length became one of the number, he was

not disappointed, but the event was followed by several weeks of great refreshing and comfort to his soul.

When you read that marvelous portraiture of church communion in his allegany of "House Beautiful," remember that this sweet and entrancing picture of Christian fellowship was drawn out of his own experience in the Baptist church at Bedford.